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President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/59/1)

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/59/1). I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, in view of its importance in the current unstable international circumstances, which require further concerted and sincere efforts to face the great challenges to peace, security and development.

We endorse the statement of the Secretary-General before this Assembly on the work of the Organization, where he stated, regarding the need for a commitment to international law and the United Nations Charter in promoting the rule of law and for curbing the use of sheer force against the weak, "Those who seek to bestow legitimacy must themselves embody it; and those who invoke international law must themselves submit to it." We agree with all those who believe that this Organization is an indispensable forum for the international community to deal with grave challenges and threats, and we view this Organization as the best place to promote multilateralism and the rule of law in order to be able to bring about a world of justice, equality and prosperity.

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization is comprehensive and it defines all the important issues considered by the United Nations previously. Some of those have been solved, and some are still awaiting international consensus. One example, and a source of concern for my delegation, is the issue of the Middle East, which is almost as old as the United Nations itself, but for which a just and comprehensive settlement has not yet been achieved.

In paragraph 20, the report states, "the peace process remained stalled and violence persisted". I believe that this can be attributed to the lack of will of a particular party to the conflict, that is Israel, to find a comprehensive settlement, to which we all aspire.

The report of the Secretary-General places importance on realizing a just and comprehensive peace. In this regard Syria reaches out for the realization of a just and comprehensive peace in accordance with the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as the Madrid peace framework and the Arab Peace Initiative, in a manner that would restore the occupied Arab territories in Golan, Palestine and Lebanon to their owners. The report, in paragraph 21, alludes to Security Council resolutions on the Middle East and other resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its resumed tenth emergency special session, particularly resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 acknowledging the legal opinion of the International Court of Justice on the separation wall being

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constructed by Israel on occupied Palestinian territories. The Court further required that Israel comply with its legal obligations. The resolution also requested the Secretary-General to establish a record of the damages caused by that wall. While we support the establishment of that record, we appeal to the Secretary-General to expedite the process in view of the suffering of the Palestinian people and of the harm they have suffered because of the wall.

The phenomenon of international terrorism has become a source of concern for all. We should work together to eliminate this dangerous phenomenon, and we must deal with its root causes. We agree with the statement made in paragraph 77 of the report that the struggle against terrorism must not take place at the expense of the fundamental freedoms and the human dignity of individuals. We should not therefore deny those rights to peoples under the yoke of foreign occupation that aspire to liberation and independence. We should not confuse the exercise of those rights, which are enshrined in the Charter, with terrorism, which we all condemn.

In that regard, we call again on the United Nations to convene an international conference to arrive at a clear definition of terrorism. We must distinguish between terrorism and the legitimate right of peoples to self-determination in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The spread of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, is a source of extreme concern to us, and we share the international community's concern at the possibility that such weapons might fall into the hands of terrorists, thereby exacerbating threats to international peace and security.

Syria has been at the forefront of those countries calling for the declaration of the Middle East as a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. We have been working with determination towards that objective. We have acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); we have concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency; and we have contributed to numerous initiatives aimed at realizing this objective, the latest of which was a draft resolution introduced by Syria on behalf of the Arab Group on 29 December 2003, to free the Middle East of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, under collective international supervision and under the auspices of the United Nations, so as to promote multilateral international agreements in the field of disarmament.

As stated in paragraph 116 of the report, the eight Millennium Development Goals continue to provide a unifying framework for the activities of the United Nations in the area of cooperation for development. In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders stressed the importance of creating an environment conducive to development and to the eradication of poverty at both the national and international levels. Development is a human right that should be provided to all — not a benefit to some at the expense of others no matter how immense the disparity between the two. It should have a high priority on our agenda, and the process should not be exploited in order to achieve political gains.

We believe that collective efforts to address development issues and to combat poverty and hunger in the developing world in general and in Africa in particular will greatly contribute to addressing the root causes of the crises facing today's world.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to stress the importance of multilateralism in the Organization's efforts to lay the groundwork for tackling all the challenges and security threats facing us. We look forward to the report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change established by the Secretary-General, and we will actively participate in all discussions on the recommendations made by the Panel so we can achieve the common goals that the entire world looks forward to.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to convey our sincere thanks to the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization, which makes clear the ever-increasing number and scope of the functions of the Organization. The report reflects the realities on the ground with respect to the various challenges and opportunities facing the international community. It once again stresses that it is only through collective action and a multilateral approach that the United Nations can realize the lofty objectives enshrined in its Charter.

In the meantime, we also look forward to reviewing the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. My delegation believes that the Panel was entrusted with a solemn responsibility, and, accordingly, expects that its

recommendations will identify and encompass the objective realities of the threats and challenges confronting the global community today.

The Islamic Republic of Iran shares the Secretary-General's view that the concepts of the rule of law and multilateralism form the only rational basis for a civilized discourse among nations. There is no doubt that those concepts were a profound source of inspiration for the architects of the Charter and constitute the driving force behind the maintenance of international peace and security through multilateral and proactive cooperation among all equal and sovereign nations.

In an era of globalization and at a time when national, regional and global peace and stability are so interlinked and interdependent, it is essential that the supremacy of the law supersede political exigency. Indeed, multilateral approaches compatible with the globalized nature of the current international arena could be pursued within the framework of a civilized dialogue among nations and in tandem with the sustained promotion of international law.

Any circumventive action based on the logic of "might makes right" and characterized by the unilateral and lawless use of force would jeopardize the fundamental pillars of the Organization. Against that background, we fully endorse the remarks made by the Secretary-General in his opening address to this body:

> "At the international level, all States — strong and weak, big and small — need a framework of fair rules, which each can be confident that others will obey." (*A/59/PV.3, p. 3*)

I need hardly reiterate that the selective application or arbitrary enforcement of the law is detrimental to the realization of that objective.

In that context, and as noted by the Secretary-General, international peace and stability can be built only on a solid foundation of interdependence, which is central for realizing the rule of law and multilateralism. It also needs to be underlined that the principle of shared responsibility lies at the heart of the Millennium Declaration. That concept represents a fundamental value universally recognized by that Declaration, by which the responsibility for managing worldwide economic and social development as well as threats to international peace and security should be shared among all nations.

The Secretary-General's perspective on the issue of peace and security must be considered thoroughly. In that respect, my delegation has noted the reference made in the report to the situation in Iraq, including the importance of the presence of the United Nations in that country and the overall security environment, which has so far prevented a larger United Nations presence in Iraq. While concurring with the Secretary-General that a higher level of security is needed in order for the United Nations to have a larger presence in Iraq, we are of the view that the United Nations should more actively engage in a process aimed at empowering the Iraqi people to determine their own destiny.

As a neighbouring country of Iraq that highly values the emergence of that country as a stable, free and democratic State, Iran believes that an independent and prosperous Iraq, with a Government representing all classes in society and holding free and fair elections as scheduled, are essential steps towards the realization of Iraq's full sovereignty and towards its stability.

As noted by the Secretary-General, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, and especially the humanitarian living conditions of Palestinians, continues to deteriorate. He rightly asserted a few days ago that recent measures have led to the deaths of scores of Palestinians, among them civilians, including children. It is alarming and very unfortunate that the Security Council has yet to reach an agreement on the way to prevent the persistence of the crimes that continue to be committed against Palestinians.

On the situation in Afghanistan, we believe that the recent massive popular participation of the Afghan people in the voter registration exercise is a clear sign that the Afghan nation is able and willing to determine its own destiny. Holding fair and free presidential and legislative elections and establishing a broad-based, representative and multi-ethnic Government are vital steps towards the democratization and reconstruction of the country. Nevertheless, we agree with the Secretary-General that a major obstacle to the success of the Bonn process is the increased cultivation of narcotics, which fuels both factional fighting and terrorism. Indeed, the problem of drugs cultivation and trafficking have put political, economic and social development and regional stability in danger.

In the field of disarmament, we share the views so eloquently advanced by the Secretary-General that

weapons of mass destruction remain of paramount importance to international peace and security. Nevertheless, it is our considered view that the continued existence of thousands of nuclear warheads in the stockpiles of nuclear-weapon States and the new plans of one of these States to produce usable mini-nuclear weapons — together with its doctrine of unilateral or pre-emptive use of force, including lowering the threshold for the use of mini-nuclear weapons — all serve to increase the legitimate concerns of the international community.

We strongly believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is the only absolute guarantee against the possible use or threat of use of those weapons. The continued existence and development of nuclear weapons will only increase the possibility of unauthorized access by non-State actors to those inhuman weapons. Although Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) is considered a preventive measure against that threat, it lacks due attention to the universality of existing multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and instruments as the highest priority of the international community.

Equally important is the issue of international terrorism, which — in the words of the Secretary-General — casts its shadow over all the peoples of the world. The United Nations must therefore be engaged in the struggle against terrorism. Effective measures to counter international terrorism also require broad international cooperation. We fully share the view of the Secretary-General that "As we join forces against terrorism, it is imperative that freedom, human rights and the rule of law be upheld and protected". (*A/59/1, para. 9*)

However, an objective review of recent developments in the international arena confirm the fact that violence and terrorism on the part of non-State actors, on the one hand, and unrestrained militarism on the part of certain States, on the other, are two faces of extremism that are mutually reinforcing, and which are fatally contributing to the escalation of global insecurity and lawlessness. Accordingly, the international community must work together to find a way out of that vicious cycle. To achieve that goal, unambiguous unity of purpose is essential.

International cooperation for development is a major issue on the agenda of the United Nations. Considerable efforts have been made towards the realization of the Development Goals set out in the Millennium Declaration. Nonetheless, much remains to be done. Large parts of the world suffer from poverty, hunger and the lack of proper education and health services. Many factors, including good governance and respect for the rule of law and human rights, contribute to economic and social development. However, we cannot, and should not, undermine the critical role that science and technology play in promoting economic and social development in many developing countries.

It would therefore be appropriate to strengthen the role of the Organization in transferring knowledge and technology in all fields to those countries. A serious obstacle to development is the proliferation and application of economic, commercial and financial embargoes, as well as the imposition of extraterritorial measures and sanctions against developing countries. Those actions are not only in contravention of the basic principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, but also adversely affect the economic and social development of targeted States. The time is right for the Organization to consider how to address the situation and establish an international environment for meaningful cooperation for development.

We believe the issue of the HIV/AIDS pandemic to be a serious health threat that has a negative impact on development, and should therefore be given the highest priority by the international community. However, the magnitude of the threat, which truly needs a global response, should not divert attention from the role and responsibility of the United Nations in other areas of development.

Along the same lines, it is rather discouraging that the report of the Secretary-General has not addressed the very important issue of globalization, despite the current debates taking place at the regional and global levels. It also appears that macroeconomic policy issues have fallen into oblivion. Instead, we have noted a commentary in the report of the Commission on the Private Sector and Development, the content of which should not overshadow other critical aspects of the work of the Organization in the area of development.

With regard to sustainable development, we support the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development in following up the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of

Implementation. The twelfth session of the Commission, which was the first substantive meeting of the Commission after the holding of the Johannesburg Summit, conveyed a strong and courageous message about the need to further strengthen the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In that regard, we share the views of the Secretary-General with regard to the need for the United Nations to enhance inter-agency coordination and strengthen the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, with a view to supporting capacity-building activities at the country level.

We take note of the Secretary-General's establishment of the Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation. It is our hope that by raising awareness and mobilizing resources, the Advisory Board's recommendations can strengthen the implementation of intergovernmental agreements contained in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In our view, the Board should focus on finding practical ways to improve implementation, rather than engage in the policy debate on water and sanitation, which is indeed the task of the Commission at its next session.

Humanitarian assistance and humanitarian response, particularly in cases of urgency and natural disaster, remain a priority for the United Nations. According to the Secretary General's report,

> "In 2003 some 700 disasters resulted in 75,000 deaths and economic losses of more than $65 billion. The death toll was many times higher than that for the previous year, largely because of the earthquake in Bam, Islamic Republic of Iran." (*ibid., para. 109*)

I am referring to the tragedy of the earthquake in Bam not only to emphasize the importance of an issue of a purely humanitarian nature, but also to wholeheartedly express our appreciation for the humanitarian assistance offered by all States to the earthquake survivors. We are also thankful to the various United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for their timely and tireless efforts in coordinating and providing humanitarian assistance. In fact, the people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran took a leading role, to the best of their ability, in assisting the victims of that catastrophic earthquake.

Next year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, which coincides with the review of the implementation of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations. The review can provide an avenue for fresh thinking about today's opportunities and challenges. The international community will be in a position to further advance this paradigm to promote peace, democracy and development.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Secretary-General has rightly noted in his report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1) that the United Nations has been through an extraordinarily challenging year. We have all seen and participated in heated discussions about what the role of the Organization should be today. It is well known that truth is born in debate, and the truth is that the United Nations is still the most universal tool for regulating international relations in conditions of globalization; there is no alternative to it. The work of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly shows convincingly that, when the United Nations lives up to its potential, we can have real hope that current problems in the areas of security and cooperation among States will be resolved.

The unprecedented wave of terrorism sweeping over the world has shown how irreplaceable the United Nations is in coordinating the fight against terrorism. Today, Russia, together with other countries, is working towards the adoption of a new Security Council resolution to combat terrorism. Building on the relevant prior Security Council decisions, the draft resolution lays out a clear strategy of collective action for the international community to combat terrorism.

The Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee is the main coordinating body in this area. As its current Chairman, Russia will continue actively to contribute to strengthening its capacity and to increasing its cooperation with international and regional organizations including the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. We can conquer terrorism only if we act together, based firmly on the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law. Arbitrary action gives rise to further violence in response. This is why we cannot but agree with the Secretary-General that we

must work in every possible way to strengthen the rule of law.

We must provide guarantees to prevent access by terrorists to weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). This is one of the most serious challenges to security for all members of the international community. Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) sets out the basis and mechanisms of a coordinated response to the black market in WMDs, and is aimed at increasing the effectiveness of non-proliferation regimes. We have a common interest in achieving real progress in this area.

A convincing indicator of the growing need for the presence of the United Nations is the increase in the Organization's peacekeeping operations, especially in Africa. The past year has been marked by significant success in settling conflicts, notably in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Haiti and a number of other hotspots. We hope that the time is near for comprehensive settlements in Sudan, Afghanistan, Burundi and Côte d'Ivoire. Yet many other regional conflagrations remain to be extinguished. Iraq and the Middle East are just two of the items on that list.

We can achieve our goal only by working together under the aegis of the United Nations and by intensifying the Organization's interaction with regional partners pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter.

At our initiative, at the two previous sessions of the General Assembly, important resolutions were adopted by consensus on developing a global strategy to respond to threats and challenges, with the United Nations playing a central role (resolutions 57/145 and 58/16). Realization of this initiative will bring to fruition the ideal of collective security, as enshrined in the Charter. We hope that work in this area will continue during the current session of the General Assembly.

It is important that the work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change should continue in this spirit. We hope that its recommendations will enable us to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations and other multilateral institutions. The Panel is expected to contribute to reform of the United Nations and its Security Council. The process should culminate in the broadest possible agreement among Member States, in the common interest of strengthening the United Nations.

As the world becomes increasingly interdependent, the United Nations should pay particular attention to combating poverty and illiteracy, especially since these create a breeding ground for terrorism and extremism. We must guarantee equitable development and combat the spread of serious diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

The Russian Government is aware of Russia's responsibility for the future of the planet and has decided to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. We hope that this issue will soon be resolved positively in the State Duma of the Russian Federation.

United Nations activities in the socio-economic area should be focused on achieving the Millennium Development Goals and on implementing the agreements made at high-level United Nations conferences and meetings. We must give the United Nations effective capacities to mobilize, with a view to developing and implementing strategies in the area of international trade, finance and investment.

Preparations are under way for the upcoming sixtieth anniversary celebrations and the summit on the five-year review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration; these will enable us to work harder to achieve the lofty goals and ideals of the Organization. Russia is ready to continue working closely with all its partners to complete that massive but noble task.

Mrs. Laohaphan (Thailand): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1). The report is an annual assessment of developments and of the progress made by the United Nations in all areas of endeavour — as well as the lack thereof and the obstacles faced by the Organization in implementing its mandates.

As the United Nations approaches its sixtieth anniversary, it is a timely occasion to look back, to take stock of its accomplishments and to make the necessary adjustments in order to forge ahead. The year 2005 has, as we know, been earmarked for the review of the Millennium Development Goals and for the convening of important debates on United Nations reform, based on the report and recommendations that the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will provide to the Secretary-General in December of this year. Therefore, we should focus our attention even more sharply on this year's report on the

work of the Organization in preparation for the watershed events of next year.

A recurrent theme emanating of the report is the growing demand placed upon the United Nations to cope with the world's problems, with restricted human and financial resources. This is a reality that is constantly echoed by the Department of Public Information, which has done a wonderful job in publicizing the fact. If one were to search on the web page of the United Nations News Service for in-house articles published since the opening of the current session relating to the problem of funding at the United Nations, one would find almost 20 articles that tell of the shortfalls that have obstructed the United Nations agencies' efforts in the areas of opening access to universal reproductive health care, combating HIV/AIDS, dealing with swarming locusts in north-west Africa, fighting a malaria epidemic in Ethiopia, fighting world poverty and hunger, moving the peace process forward in Liberia, carrying out ceasefire monitoring activities in Darfur and helping Haiti recover from natural disaster, to name just a few of the most prominent news stories.

As arbiter of world peace and security, guarantor of human rights and dignity and promoter of development and economic and social well-being for the poor and the needy, the United Nations has been incessantly called upon to solve the world's most pressing problems. However, the means provided to the Organization are not commensurate with the magnitude and complexity of the tasks assigned to it.

The report notes the surge in demand for United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building activities, which currently involve 16 operations around the world and more than 56,000 peacekeepers, and links the success of new operations to continued political, financial and human resources support from Member States. According to statistics cited by the Secretary-General, over the entire course of its nearly six-decade history, the United Nations has spent just over $30 billion on peacekeeping — a mere thirtieth of global military expenditures last year alone. Considering what the United Nations has accomplished in this area, it is clear that the world has been reaping a peace dividend from investing in peacekeeping. This investment is a relatively small sum compared to the amount that the world is spending on defence each year. The figure also suggests the world's capacity to pay. It is thus incumbent upon Member States to help ensure that the United Nations is able to fully implement its peace and security mandates by paying their peacekeeping assessments in full and on time.

Thailand welcomes and supports the continued intensification of the partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations in pursuit of the shared goals of peace, stability and development in a framework of democratic governance and respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law, as stated in the report. The involvement of the Economic Community of West African States in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, of the Organization of American States in Haiti and of the African Union (AU) in Darfur are good examples of burden-sharing and of relegating responsibility to organizations that possess a deeper understanding of the regional dimensions and implications of security problems.

In Thailand's immediate region, the Association of South-East Asian Nations is in the process of establishing a region-wide security community by the year 2020. The question that States Members of the United Nations should explore is how we can help regional organizations sustain adequate logistic, financial and human capabilities on their own. As the Nigerian President told the Security Council with respect to the AU's presence in Darfur,

> "We should avoid a situation where African Union troops on the ground are handicapped owing to a lack of requisite financial resources and logistics support." (*S/PV.5043, p. 5*)

Humanitarian assistance is another area in which funding falls far below the mark. The report states that both new and protracted conflicts, as well as natural disasters, continue to take a toll on the world's poor, often undermining whatever progress has been achieved or creating new emergencies. Haiti is a case in point, where an environmental catastrophe has made it much more difficult for the country to restore its devastated economy, not to mention its political system and the rule of law. In the report, the Secretary-General voices his concern that the consequences of natural hazards pose a great challenge to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The implementation of disaster-reduction activities will hopefully help to lower the risk posed by natural calamity. However, humanitarian crises, such as food insecurity, displaced populations and human rights abuse, especially against women and children, are

happening in the four corners of the world and require an urgent and coordinated response from relief agencies and, most of all, funding from the international community.

However, money is not the solution to the world's ills. Money can be pumped into a country to help alleviate its economic hardship, but it will not enable that country to survive and thrive on its own. To ensure that a country reaches the eight MDGs and sustainable development, partnership for development may well be the best long-term solution. Thailand agrees that there is a need to expand trade, increase official development assistance, relieve foreign debt and reform the international financial system. Thailand also supports the initiative launched by Brazil, France, Chile and Spain to explore new sources of funding to fight poverty and hunger.

The ability of the United Nations to respond to threats and challenges effectively depends on the resources and manpower available to it, which, in turn, depend on the contributions and commitment of Member States. The report also mentions how regular budget contributions have also fallen behind, severely curtailing the level of cash available. This is a chronic problem faced by the United Nations because of delays in payment and the accumulating arrears of Member States. Failure to pay in full and on time will also adversely impact the work of the International Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, as the report warns.

A major challenge to the United Nations in this regard is how to ensure the political will of each and every Member State and how to instil a sense of global responsibility. Political will and commitment of States do not come from the leadership of policy-makers alone. To gain support for the United Nations, public awareness must be galvanized as well. People should understand the role and contribution of the United Nations as well as the gravity of the issues that the United Nations tries to address, so that public support for the work of the Organization can be generated.

The report concludes with a chapter on partnerships, in which the Secretary-General discusses the reorganization of the Department of Public Information and the need to encourage public dialogue on many important issues. Campaigns to increase awareness of the danger of HIV/AIDS, particularly in donor countries, have led to broad support in recent years in terms of resources, actions and partnerships among all actors. It is heartening to learn that the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) now functions as a clearinghouse for partnership information and a facilitator of funding opportunities for the United Nations, especially through the advice that it has been giving to external entities on how they can assist in the achievement of the MDGs.

Thailand encourages wider partnerships between the United Nations and civil society, corporations and other stakeholders, since such alliances will help the Organization cope more effectively with the present-day challenges of the globalized world.

Ms. Holguín-Cuellar (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for the preparation and presentation of his report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1). The report informs us, as it does every year, of the important work that the United Nations is doing to achieve world peace and security and to promote the economic and social development of peoples, respect for human rights and the fulfilment of humanitarian commitments.

Colombia recognizes and commends that work. President Uribe also did so last week, during his address to the General Assembly (see A/59/PV.15), when he described the progress made by the Colombian Government in the social arena and thanked the 21 United Nations agencies that work in my country for their support. All these United Nations institutions, including the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Colombia, work in complete independence, with the full support and backing of the Government and in close cooperation with State and civil society institutions.

As the international community knows, the current and recent Governments of Colombia have always been open to engaging in dialogue with illegal armed groups. When President Uribe was inaugurated in August 2002, he reiterated his availability for dialogue on the basis of a ceasefire and an end to hostilities on the part of the illegal armed groups. He has also requested the continuation of the good offices that the Secretary-General has maintained since 1999 through his Special Adviser on Colombia.

The national Government remains open to the possibility of dialogue with all illegal armed groups that cease hostilities and show a clear willingness for

peace. In that context, we have initiated a process with self-defence groups that should result in the total demobilization of their members by the end of 2005, as established in the Santa Fe de Ralito Agreement of 15 July 2003. That process — which is moving forward under the supervision of the Organization of American States, and in which some European countries have shown interest in participating — deserves full support so that it can achieve the disarmament, demobilization and reinsertion of thousands of members of that illegal armed group.

The Government of Colombia has undertaken significant peace efforts with other illegal armed groups. A broad and flexible proposal was recently sent to the National Liberation Army through the Government of Mexico, which has been working on a facilitation effort. Likewise, the Colombian Government appreciates the good offices employed by the United Nations aimed at a rapprochement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) with regard to a humanitarian agreement. A proposal aimed at liberating kidnapped persons has been sent through the Swiss Government to that illegal armed group.

All those efforts are well known in national public opinion and in the international community. But, as the people and the Government of Colombia have remained open to those who show a willingness to enter into a serious negotiation process, we remain steadfast in our fight against terrorism and violence, which each year cause tens of thousands of deaths and consume 5.8 per cent of the country's gross domestic product.

To deal with those scourges, we have been implementing a democratic security policy, which is already producing impressive results, such as a police presence in all the country's municipalities and declines of 22 per cent in homicides, 35 per cent in massacres and 34.7 per cent in kidnappings. That policy — which also covers the fight against the production and trafficking of illicit drugs — has also enabled us, for the first time, to reverse the growth trend of illegal crops, whose cultivation has declined by 30 per cent annually since 2002. The most recent report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime recorded that significant success.

I make these observations to clarify the fact that what paragraph 31 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/1) describes as "an intensive military campaign against the two major guerrilla groups" is actually the most successful security policy Colombia has ever implemented — a policy that is restoring the rule of law throughout the national territory, has reduced violence and terrorism with strict respect for human rights and has reduced the rate of internal displacement by 40 per cent. It is a policy aimed at protecting the Colombian civilian population, which for decades has suffered from terrorism perpetrated by illegal groups.

The democratic security policy is not opposed to a negotiated settlement; that is one of its goals and is even becoming its basis. A lasting peace requires dialogue and effective institutions. The Constitution and the law are the best guarantees that we will go down that road with transparency and seriousness. The consolidation of a firm and transparent authority depends on a similarly firm approach towards all illegal armed groups, without any distinction. During this administration, the fight against self-defence groups has been the strongest and most impressive in the country's recent history. Among members of these groups, the number of those killed has increased by 210 per cent, with the number of those captured rising 280 per cent.

Since its beginning, this Government has worked to demobilize members of guerrilla and self-defence groups. Today 6,000 people, both men and women, have deserted the ranks of such groups. The Government is carrying out a programme to help those people return to civilian life. Fifty-seven per cent are members of FARC, 22 per cent are members of the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia, 17 per cent are members of the National Liberation Army and 4 per cent belong to other dissident groups. This programme — vital for our peace and national reconciliation efforts — represents an enormous financial and logistical effort for a country like Colombia. That is why we require the support and cooperation of the international community and of the United Nations to provide these thousands of Colombians with an alternative to a life of violence.

The Colombian Government appreciates the assistance and cooperation of the international community with regard to our peace and national reconciliation efforts. The support provided by the Organization of American States (OAS) in the area of verifying and supplementing the efforts aimed at

dialogue in my country has been invaluable. Likewise, we welcome all cooperation and support initiatives from international bodies and friendly countries, which, at the request of the Colombian Government, may enable us to reach a definitive and lasting peace.

We appreciate and thank the Secretary-General for the actions he has taken in using his good offices, which have been requested by the Colombian Government. Moreover, we consider it appropriate to jointly assess the relevance and effectiveness of the contacts that the Special Envoy has made with the illegal armed groups.

Finally, with regard to the draft legislation on justice and reparation, we should note that it would be applied not only to the self-defence groups that have begun peace dialogues with the Government, but to all illegal armed groups that decide to lay down their weapons and enter into a serious negotiation process. For the Colombian Government, it is clear that those responsible for atrocities or crimes against humanity — whether they be members of guerrilla or self-defence groups — cannot benefit from pardons or amnesties. Such cases require additional legal instruments that recognize the principles governing the fight against impunity: truth, justice and reparation. To that end, the Government has elaborated the draft legislation on justice and reparation, which, after having been considered in the Senate and discussed at public hearings, is now being considered in the House of Representatives. The objective is to obtain a legal instrument, based on the broadest possible national consensus, which will enable us to try persons who have participated in peace processes but are responsible for atrocities.

The people and the Government of Colombia are aware of the humanitarian and human rights situation created by violence and the rise of terrorism in our country. That is why, more than discussing the total numbers of internally displaced persons — which are impossible to calculate exactly and which trivialize a human tragedy — we are committed to giving such persons sufficient and timely attention. The current Government has multiplied by eight times the financial resources allocated to assist that highly vulnerable population. The investment budget of the social solidarity network — an entity whose mandate is to assist such persons — has grown from $14 million in 2002 to $120 million for 2005. More than 70,000 internally displaced persons have returned, and we are working hard to consolidate peace in the regions and thus to ensure more massive returns.

However, as the situation requires coordination and cooperation with the United Nations system on the part of all parties that work in the humanitarian area — including regional and local Governments, non-governmental organizations, international organizations and donor countries — in Colombia we have begun to negotiate on a second humanitarian assistance plan that will require the firm commitment, not only of the Government of Colombia, but of all the parties involved and of the United Nations system, as well as international cooperation.

I should like to conclude by mentioning another humanitarian tragedy that Colombia is experiencing as a result of illegal armed groups. I am referring to the antipersonnel mines that they have planted throughout the country, which kill and maim mostly Colombian soldiers and police, but also defenceless civilians — particularly children — and prevent development in vast areas of the Colombian countryside. We are grateful for the international cooperation provided to us by non-governmental organizations and international organizations such as the OAS and the United Nations in the dangerous work of demining various countries. We reaffirm the importance of continuing and increasing the assistance and international cooperation in that regard.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): This year's report of the Secretary-General (A/59/1) once again reveals, as in previous years, the profound imbalance that affects cooperative efforts to try to resolve, through the United Nations, the great problems faced by humanity. It is an imbalance between the Organization's ambitious objectives and its limited means to attain them.

For example, in the area of peacekeeping and peace-building, the demand for the human and financial resources needed to ensure the success of old and new peacekeeping operations has increased considerably, but what is offered to satisfy that demand continues to be insufficient and slow. Recently, the Security Council approved an increase in troops in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where Uruguay has deployed a contingent of 2,000 officials and soldiers for a number of years. But the authorized increase was less than half of what the Secretary-General considered necessary. Troops for the new operations in Liberia,

Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi and Haiti have not always been deployed in the numbers required or with the necessary speed.

The report of the Secretary-General identifies numerous sectors of international cooperation in which there are disturbing signs of violations, non-compliance and lack of commitment by States with respect to international agreements. Those include the sectors of disarmament, non-proliferation, the ban on nuclear testing, the ban on anti-personnel landmines, the Statute of the International Criminal Court and biological diversity. We find similar shortcomings in the areas of social, economic and political cooperation. We can recall various instances of shortfalls in financial contributions for humanitarian and development objectives.

The Secretary-General notes that progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals has been uneven and that so far, four years after the Millennium Declaration, there have been few positive results. However, he also notes that some time-bound and measurable goals are still achievable by the deadline of 2015, but that will be possible only if developed and developing countries fulfil their commitments and properly implement agreed social and economic policies and mobilize promised financial resources.

The principal message of the report of the Secretary-General is that it is time that words gave way to action. We know what we want. We know what we have to do to achieve it, and we know how to do it. Thus, all that remains to do now is act. We must act immediately and make what we have been promising in recent years become a reality. To do that, we do not need new summits, new declarations or new resolutions, and we do not need to create new rules or reform existing institutions.

The Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus, like two sides of the same coin, clearly establish the responsibilities of both the developed and the developing countries. The developed countries have the responsibility for achieving the first seven of the Millennium Development Goals, while the developing countries must achieve the goal of creating a world partnership for development, based on genuine solidarity, leading to a genuine readiness to put in place mechanisms for fulfilling the commitments made in the three key components of trade, official development assistance and foreign debt.

With respect to international trade and development, we view as positive the agreement reached in Geneva on 1 August to relaunch the Doha round of negotiations and strengthen the multilateral trade system and the World Trade Organization.

While official development assistance has grown since the Millennium Summit and while a group of countries — Belgium, France, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom — have announced that they will increase their contributions, we are still far from achieving the $100 billion that experts have estimated as necessary for fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals on schedule. Efforts on external debt, debt relief and the use of the resources that have been freed up to achieve the Millennium Development Goals have started to yield results. We should therefore continue in that direction and broaden the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative.

We attach great importance to next year's high-level meeting of the General Assembly to follow up the commitments made in the Monterrey Consensus and the Economic and Social Council meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. We hope that the outcome will make a useful contribution to the high-level meeting to review progress on achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

In the three paragraphs the report devotes to terrorism, the Secretary-General inform us of the strengthening of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and of the assistance activities of the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. We would have liked to receive updated information on the coordination of the counter-terrorism activities performed by the many components of the United Nations system active in that area.

We reaffirm our belief that the international community still lacks a concrete counter-terrorism strategy that is broad, coordinated and effective in order to fight international terrorism. That is undoubtedly a serious gap in the system of overall international cooperation, not only because that gap limits our potential to fight terrorism effectively but also because, in the absence of an internationally agreed strategy, the individual responses of States to defend themselves from that scourge could be

misaimed and could have an effect contrary to what was intended.

I believe we must devote ourselves without delay to formulating a counter-terrorism strategy at the international, regional and bilateral levels, aimed not only at preventing, eliminating and punishing all terrorist activities but also at identifying the causes that give rise to terrorism. Such a strategy should include, among other things, the operational coordination of national security, information, police and immigration services and the establishment of common procedures for extradition.

With respect to chapter VI of the report, on management, I shall briefly comment on the strengthening of the Organization. Paragraph 256 notes that further efforts to consolidate the network of information centres in the regions will proceed in the coming year. We recall that the General Assembly has given no mandate in that regard and that originally the idea was to save money in the developed countries by using advanced communication technologies and to apply those savings to enhancing the programmes of the information centres in developing countries. It is our understanding that the will of the General Assembly must be heeded and that the Secretariat should submit a constructive, comprehensive proposal for enhancing the functioning of the information centres in all developing countries.

Mr. Moleko (Lesotho): I extend to you, Sir, our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. My delegation pledges its support to you to ensure that you succeed in your important work. In the same breath, let me thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1).

The world has degenerated into a more dangerous place for us, its inhabitants. The violence that we have witnessed, directed at the most vulnerable members of our society — women and children — is of great concern to my delegation. We have seen acts of terrorism directed at children in the name of a national cause in Beslan, the Russian Federation. We have seen images of hapless women and children in Darfur, Palestine and other places where they are driven to destitution. These and other acts of violence undermine the efforts of our Organization in the promotion of peace and security. The United Nations should be commended for its efforts in conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace-building and peacekeeping. The efforts of our Organization in denying terrorists access to weapons of mass destruction are commendable.

We need to work together, as the international community, to halt the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, because they are instruments that destabilize most countries. We have all seen the unfortunate results of unilateralism. The fruits of multilateralism, on the other hand, can be seen in Afghanistan, where elections will be held soon.

There is a need to consolidate peace in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone. That is a goal that we can achieve if we focus on it. We are confident that the continued leadership of the Secretary-General will lead to peace and political stability in those sister countries.

We are seeing an increase in violence directed at women through rape. Such gender-based violence is a terrible scar on our world. We welcome the guidelines from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees entitled *Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Guidelines for Prevention and Response*.

We also welcome the emerging cooperation in the United Nations family to support children separated from their families by war and conflict. The inter-agency guiding principles on unaccompanied and separated children, issued in February 2004; are very welcome. It is our hope that they will help lead to a halt in the recruitment of child solders and the better protection of the most vulnerable members of our society, children.

I cannot conclude my remarks without making reference to the threat posed by HIV/AIDS to the very survival of many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. We welcome the efforts by the international community in fighting that pandemic. The leadership of the Secretary-General, through his Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, Stephen Lewis, is beginning to bear fruit. However, we should observe that the enormity of the problem requires more resources that are currently available. Sub-Saharan Africa cannot achieve any of the Millennium Development Goals without arresting the spread of that pandemic.

Finally, my delegation would like to thank your predecessor, Sir, Mr. Julian Hunte, President of the

General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, for his efforts in the revitalization of the Assembly. The goal of reforming the Security Council, however, remains elusive. Yet such reform is a sine qua non for ensuring its capacity in the maintenance of international peace and security. The composition of that body must reflect the complexion of the membership of the Organization. The working methods of the Council need to be modified. The Security Council must be representative, as well as democratic, if it is to effectively discharge its duties.

Mr. Sen (India): We welcome this opportunity to participate in the debate, under agenda item 10, on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/59/1). We thank the Secretary-General for the report and for the statement he made at the commencement of the general debate introducing the report. The theme of the statement, the rule of law at both the national and the international levels, was very welcome and timely. In the context of a longer historical time-span, we may ask whether the United Nations has performed better than during the cold war. In matters of peace and security, the results are equally — if not more — problematic. In economic matters, there has been clearly a marked decline from a period when ideas such as the General Scheme of Preferences, the Integrated Programme for Commodities, the Special Drawing Rights, supplementary financing and debt forgiveness were first advanced and agreed upon in the United Nations and then followed up by specialized agencies. Those strengthened peace and security in spite of the cold war. However, it would be unfair to put all the blame on the United Nations — for the United Nations is only as strong as its Members.

The Secretary-General's description of the year under review as extraordinarily challenging is very apt. The period — beginning with the commencement of military action in Iraq and, in its aftermath, the surge in peacekeeping operations and the threat of international terrorism and its linkages with weapons of mass destruction — has been both challenging and taxing for the United Nations system. At the same time, the increased responsibilities in dealing with transnational issues relating to international crime, poverty, hunger, malnutrition, infectious diseases and epidemics, environmental degradation, human rights violations and humanitarian emergencies, have called upon resources and reserves that the international community has striven hard to find.

The new and onerous demands being made on the United Nations system are but manifestations of the post-cold-war twenty-first century, where intra-State conflicts outnumber inter-State conflicts, where failed States place a heavy burden on their neighbours and on the international community and where interpretations of the rule of law are consistently stretched. In the circumstances, we agree with the Secretary-General that the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change should be bold and practicable.

The year 2005 will be crucial in addressing the new challenges with which the United Nations is confronted. The coinciding of the recommendations of the High-level Panel, the Millennium+5 event and the sixtieth year of the establishment of the Organization should provide sufficient impetus for the international community, in particular the Member States, to endow the United Nations with the strength, resources and direction required to enable it to boldly and effectively face the future.

We agree with the Secretary-General's view that United Nations reform will not be complete without Security Council reform, bringing it into line with today's realities. We hope that the High-level Panel will take note of and comprehensively address the issue of Security Council restructuring. There is a widespread view, particularly within the developing world, that the imbalance in the current composition of the Security Council is making the Council's decisions more difficult for many countries to accept and implement. Therefore, the bold and practicable ideas that could emerge from the High-level Panel to address the many ways and means of increasing the relevance and effectiveness of the United Nations in diverse areas such as counter-terrorism, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, humanitarian crises and the like, would in large measure hinge on the ability of the Panel to comprehensively and satisfactorily address the imbalance in the Council's composition.

In his report, the Secretary-General has recalled that the Charter requires the United Nations to promote conditions for economic and social progress and development, as well as solutions to international economic, health and related problems. He has drawn

attention to the increasing gap between demand and raised resources required to address natural disasters, refugee situations and other humanitarian emergencies; the fight against HIV/AIDS; and the critical situation in Africa, among other responsibilities devolving on the international community.

While the executive and enforcement roles of the United Nations in areas such as peace and security and, to some extent, in disarmament and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, are paramount, many developing countries — for obvious reasons — view United Nations engagement in the social and economic sectors as seminal. The United Nations is regarded by developing nations as the global conscience-keeper, and as such it must preserve that role and guide the work of specialized agencies in those areas.

The report also draws attention to the role played by the United Nations in conflict prevention and peace-making in various parts of the world, ranging from Iraq and the rest of the Middle East to Cyprus, the Sudan and Asia. The case made by the Secretary-General for the prevention of conflicts through early warning and quiet diplomacy would undoubtedly make unnecessary major politico-military efforts to resolve them later. At the same time, the limitations of imposing preventive and peace-making services on Member States that do not want them must be borne in mind.

The United Nations has had a tradition of directly addressing operational prevention through preventive diplomacy, but it should also consider the enhanced implementation of a structural prevention strategy to address the political, social, cultural, economic, environmental and other structural causes that often underlie the immediate symptoms of armed conflicts. The United Nations system as a whole could begin to consider the mandates of its agencies, funds and programmes through a prevention lens. It could also consider strengthening its capacity to help coordinate international efforts by all actors — including Member States, international financial institutions, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector — to carry out structural prevention strategies.

The surge in peacekeeping brings new challenges, the principal one being that of sustained commitment in terms of both troops and specialized military and civilian support services from countries that have men and financial resources. Regrettably, there continues to be a lag, with almost 80 per cent of the troops deployed in United Nations peacekeeping operations being contributed by developing countries. The issues of effective planning, congruity among mandates, resources allocated and objectives to be achieved, along with the safety and security of peacekeepers, are other areas of particular concern. Those questions should be the subject of constant dialogue and interaction among the troop-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat if peacekeeping is to be effective.

The surge in peacekeeping has been accompanied by a tendency to lean on regional solutions. Reliance on regional solutions cannot and should not absolve the United Nations of its responsibility and its commitment to be the primary guarantor of the maintenance of international peace and security. While coalitions of the willing may have been authorized by the Security Council for enforcement action, in many other circumstances of complex peacekeeping operations, the broadest range of capabilities available to the international community can be brought to bear only through the United Nations. The challenge is how best to involve regional organizations without regionalizing peacekeeping.

India remains steadfast in its commitment to the ideal of promoting world peace and security; our contribution to United Nations peacekeeping is part of that broader strategy. We have been one of the most consistent contributors of troops to the United Nations and shall continue to uphold that tradition. We shall continue to work with the Secretariat and with Member States in order to make peacekeeping the effective instrument that we all wish it to be.

Even as countries formerly beset by conflict emerge to find peace and development, new areas of the world are faced with humanitarian emergencies of varying proportions. The efforts of the international community need to provide humanitarian solace to those areas that have recently descended into crisis situations, while not forgetting those that no longer have the benefit of the so-called "CNN effect".

We are therefore concerned that humanitarian assistance continues to be unevenly allocated and that its levels remain insufficient. We are concerned that contributions made by July 2004 fulfilled only 32 per cent of the requirements halfway through the Consolidated Appeal period. The section of the report

under the heading "Funding humanitarian emergencies" provides details of the shortfalls faced by more than one agency. Even security needs are fully funded only in the case of Iraq, while many less prominent emergencies have experienced a lack of security personnel, resources and assets. We endorse the Secretary-General's call to the donor community to ensure that funding for humanitarian operations is increased and that it is provided more consistently across humanitarian emergencies to cover the needs of all sectors. We trust, however, that that will not be accomplished at the cost of official such assistance and outlays for such assistance.

It is heartening to note that the refugee population has decreased significantly, falling 20 per cent overall from 2002 to the present. We have noted that in Afghanistan, while more 3.5 million refugees and internally displaced persons have returned to their homes since the end of 2001, an estimated 180,000 internally displaced persons and 2 million refugees remain in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. Greater political stability and protection and freedom from the continuing acts of terrorism perpetrated by the resurgent remnants of the Taliban would, we believe, create a more congenial atmosphere for the return of Afghan refugees.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the impartiality and neutrality of the humanitarian response must be maintained in all integrated missions. The humanitarian function should retain its sanctity and respect by remaining apolitical, neutral and impartial. However, we strongly believe that while certain situations may demand an integrated mission, that should be the exception rather than the norm. The association of military personnel with a humanitarian mission would negatively affect the public perception of humanitarian personnel. In a world becoming increasingly suspicious, even of the activities of the humanitarian arm of the United Nations — a situation that poses serious security risks and concerns — it is imperative to maintain the separate character of the humanitarian function to the maximum extent possible. The basic principles for providing humanitarian assistance were well established in resolution 46/182. Wherever the humanitarian function is performed as part of an integrated mission, those guiding principles must be respected.

We recently witnessed the potential of natural disasters to cause widespread havoc and destruction in several Caribbean countries. The economic losses caused by natural disasters are even more difficult to bear when the victims are the poor of the developing world. Natural disasters pose a great challenge to the efforts of developing countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The developing countries — especially the disaster-prone ones among them — would benefit from assistance in the area of capacity-building in early-warning systems.

India is steadfastly committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and we are steadily working towards that objective. Like other delegations, however, we remain concerned that the pace of achieving the Goals remains uneven and that, at the current pace, many parts of the world would be unable to reach the targets by 2015. We support the need for the fulfilment of Goal 8 by the development partner countries. But official development assistance alone may not be enough, as capacity-building policies and strategies will also be needed in many countries, particularly in Africa.

The Secretary-General rightly observed in paragraph 139 of his report that "increased and more equitable world trade holds forth the prospect of helping nations to achieve the Millennium Development Goals". We share the view that the successful outcome of the Doha Programme of Action will depend largely on the manner in which the interests and concerns of developing countries are taken into account, as well as on their own negotiating skills and struggles in the post-framework-agreement period.

The Secretary-General pointed out in his report that a road map for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action on transit transport cooperation among land-locked developing countries, transit developing countries and development partners, including donor countries and international financial institutions, has been prepared and validated through a meeting of United Nations entities and agencies, including the World Bank Group. We welcome that development.

In his report, the Secretary-General observed that water and its linkages to health, poverty reduction, gender equality, education, environmental protection and peace are crucial to sustainable development. India recognizes the crucial importance of initiatives in the area of water and sanitation in improving the quality of

the life of the poor, and we have given considerable attention to water and sanitation programmes in our development plans. We share the view that the question of safe drinking water needs greater prominence both globally and locally. The major constraints faced by developing countries in implementing the agreed Goals are the non-availability of financial resources and of necessary technologies. These need to be addressed with a sense of urgency.

We share the view that science and technology are critical elements in our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and that there is a need to address questions of connectivity and access to information and communication technologies and biotechnology, as well as technology transfer and capacity-building.

The Government of India has decided to adhere to the two Optional Protocols to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child — namely, those on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

With regard to the establishment of the rule of law in post-conflict situations, we concur with the view that a "one-size-fits-all" approach should be avoided. The legal and cultural traditions of the local community have to play a key role in devising an approach for the re-establishment of the rule of law. The involvement of local actors and legal professionals, therefore, could provide a more lasting solution than one based on transplanted outside expertise, which may be unsuitable for local conditions. In terms of the United Nations Charter, the General Assembly should debate this, along with many other themes.

The provision of safety and security to United Nations personnel both in Headquarters and in the field has become an urgent task. While we note that some interim measures have been taken in this area, ad hoc approaches bring about an unwarranted sense of complacency and, in the long term, are bound to be counter-productive. We await the report of the Secretary-General called for under resolution 58/295 and hope that it will take a comprehensive and long-term view of this subject and propose a coherent plan of action involving all entities concerned.

We are disappointed to note that there has not been much progress on the Capital Master Plan over the last year. The principal stumbling block continues to be in the area of financing for that project. We need to address this issue with some urgency in this session.

Reform of the planning, programming and budgeting cycle, mandated by the General Assembly during its last session, has resulted in the preparation of a new strategic framework for the Organization to replace the medium-term plan. We do hope that with a shorter time horizon of two years, and with the plan now being coterminous with the budget, it will lead to better planning and delivery of mandated activities and to greater accountability of programme managers.

It is unfortunate that regular budget contributions during the last year fell behind previous years. Some peacekeeping missions are perennially short of funds. At the same time, the United Nations faces an unprecedented surge in new peacekeeping demands. This makes it critical for Member States to make full and timely payment of assessed contributions. Professed commitment to the United Nations by Member States needs to be backed up by living up to the obligations.

We shall provide more detailed comments on the various issues before this session under the respective agenda items.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): Mr. President, at the outset let me congratulate you on your well-deserved election to preside over the United Nations General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. I admire your leadership, as well as your long and illustrious experience in diplomacy. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in your efforts to make this session a success.

I would like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1).

The United Nations was created to bring countries together to work collectively in order to promote international peace and security, to foster cooperation for development, to protect vulnerable people, and to advance human rights and the rule of law. The present deliberation affords us the opportunity to assess the performance of the United Nations over the last 12 months and help the Organization chart a more robust and defined course in the future.

Clearly, the United Nations has shown a mixed record of achievements during the review period. Some

problems have yielded to resolution and others are moving in the right direction. Meanwhile, many old challenges have persisted and new ones have emerged. For instance, in the area of peace and security, Guatemala and Sierra Leone are limping back to normalcy. Afghanistan, though still dangerous, is moving toward democratic elections. Although the handover of power to the Iraqi people on 30 June 2004 is welcome, Iraq continues to be a major concern to the international community. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is taking innocent lives on both sides and destabilizing the whole region. Those two situations together could cause the entire Middle East to explode and unleash political instability and economic hardships on the whole world.

The United Nations has had to mount peacekeeping operations in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi and Haiti to restore calm and normalcy in those countries during the review period. Sudan appears to be the next candidate for the deployment of such operations. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, despite the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation, is still highly volatile. Nepal has contributed its troops to those operations and looks forward to increased cooperation with the Security Council and the Secretariat in the endeavour of promoting international peace and security.

Terrorism has become a major threat to international peace and security. Al Qaeda and its cells, as well as domestic terror groups, continue to launch vicious attacks on innocent civilians in many countries around the world. The global community has yet to come up with an adequate legal and operational response to stamp out this menace. Nepal itself is in the clutches of conflict and brutality unleashed by the so-called Maoists. His Majesty's Government is committed to finding a political settlement to the problem and to protecting the people's lives and property until such a settlement is found. We appreciate the Secretary-General's offer of good offices to help us find an amicable resolution to the Maoist problem. However, at the moment we are trying to find a solution on our own.

Durable peace will be a mirage without committed efforts at disarmament. Unfortunately, nuclear disarmament has hit a brick wall, fuelling nuclear weapons proliferation around the world. Controls on small arms and light weapons remain woefully inadequate to prevent non-State actors from acquiring and misusing such weapons.

In view of those various challenges, Nepal welcomes the appointment of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We hope the Panel will be able to come up with pragmatic and realistic recommendations that will help the United Nations and the world community at large to deal effectively with the existing and gathering threats to peace and security.

For the majority of the world's people, poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease remain the most urgent and primary concerns. Those conditions have become a major source of tension and conflict. Thanks to spectacular progress in poverty reduction in countries like China and India, the number of people living in absolute poverty has somewhat receded. However, that is small solace to the majority of countries that have stagnated or declined in their economic growth and development performance. Hunger is taking the lives of women and children. HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria are decimating countries and generations. Globalization has brought few fruits to developing countries, and sustainable development has yet to take off.

Meeting the Millennium Development Goals will remain a mirage for many developing countries unless the international community does more to help. Although official development assistance has shown an upward trend, it remains far short of the additional $50 billion needed annually to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative has been frustratingly slow in providing relief in order to the candidate countries, and it is woefully limited in its coverage, since it does not include all least developed countries (LDCs) that need debt relief in order to stimulate their economies. Some development partners have relaxed access for products from the least developed countries to their markets, but others have yet to do so. Market access remains a major concern for developing countries and the Doha round is halting and slow in making progress to provide a level playing field to those countries. In addition, foreign direct investment has bypassed the majority of developing countries and most least developed nations.

It is encouraging that the number of refugees has declined over the last few years; but there has been an increase in the number of internally displaced persons.

Many refugee situations have persisted and remain as intractable as ever. Among them is the plight of more than 100,000 Bhutanese refugees who have been living for over a decade in camps in eastern Nepal. Despite the best efforts of Nepal to resolve the problem through dialogue, the refugees have not been able to return home, owing to Bhutan's procrastination strategy.

Natural disasters have affected many countries, several of them in the Caribbean region which was devastated by the recent hurricanes. Those countries need greater support from the international community to help them recover and to expedite their reconstruction efforts. Concerted endeavours are also necessary to take mitigating measures to prevent future disasters or to lessen their impact.

There have been unprecedented advances in the pursuit of democracy and human rights around the world. A rich body of international law has evolved over time, as well. But observing the provisions of international law, human rights treaties and democratic governance continues to remain a serious challenge.

Nepal, as a staunch supporter of multilateralism and as a nation wedded to multiparty democracy and constitutional monarchy, is committed to practicing democracy and respecting human rights and the rule of law at home. We also believe the same standards and values should be applied to global governance.

It is evident that the United Nations has been working in all those areas of common interest to humanity. It is a major player in keeping peace and promoting security in the world. Although its resources for development are fairly limited, the United Nations has been playing a catalytic role in that vital realm as well. This Organization is at the forefront of providing humanitarian assistance and advancing human rights and the rule of law.

In Nepal, we indeed appreciate these critical roles the United Nations has been playing to create a better world for all, but the United Nations also has numerous limitations of its own that must be overcome by strengthening its legislative processes and executive structures to promote fairness and equity among Member States, greater accountability among programme managers and increased security for its staff.

For this, the United Nations needs urgent revitalization so that it can grapple with conflicts and development challenges around the globe. Its sister agencies, such as the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, also require drastic reforms in order to give voice to the weak and small within the community of nations. In all those reforms, we see a vital role for the United Nations itself.

Nepal believes that, working together, we can create a more efficient, effective and equitable United Nations and a better world order, in which all countries can enjoy the benefits of peace, development, human rights and the rule of law.

Mr. de Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): In commenting on the work of the Organization and the report presented to us by the Secretary-General (A/59/1), I would like to begin by expressing the satisfaction of Peru for having been host to the Secretary-General and Mrs. Annan last November. The fond memories that that visit evoked in Peru are still alive today.

In the twenty-first century, the world is becoming a paradoxical reality. On the one hand, it is becoming integrated through productive processes, trade and financial trends and because of the great progress in the areas of digital communications and the Internet. Yet, on the other hand, it is being fragmented because of civil wars, ethnic and religious conflicts, terrorism, social inequality and environmental degradation.

As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, these contradictory tendencies of globalization and fragmentation call into question national and international governability. Today as never before, we are seeing how many poor nation-States are becoming ungovernable, collapsing into chaos and civil war. We are seeing how new non-State actors, such as terrorist organizations and drug and arms traffickers, are emerging and achieving global power.

In the sort of fragmented world that we are seeing, no nation, as powerful as it may be, will be able to unilaterally establish a new order. Therefore, at the beginning of a new century, we are looking at a natural vacuum in world power. If we do not quickly fill that vacuum with a multilateral form of governability, then that could lead us to international anarchy.

In light of that situation, with all of its implications, the United Nations today is an indispensable organization whether we like it or not, one without which we will never be able to bring about

a new world order aimed at preventing and pacifying civil, ethnic and religious conflicts; fighting terrorism and global crime; punishing crimes against humanity, including ethnic cleansing and genocide; eradicating poverty and hunger; and protecting the environment.

One of the symptoms of international anarchy that has begun to emerge is the proliferation, after the cold war, of more than 30 civil conflicts that have caused 5 million deaths and almost 17 million refugees. Those conflicts, caused by political, ethnic or religious hatred, are converting many countries into veritable factories for crimes against humanity. In light of that serious situation, the United Nations cannot abdicate its responsibility to protect populations that are not being protected by their own Governments. That is why true reform of the United Nations must now be aimed, above all, at strengthening the legitimate use of force by the Organization in order to prevent massive human rights violations, ethnic cleansing and genocide. Reform of the Security Council must therefore be sufficiently broad to give its decisions greater democratic legitimacy. But it must also be realistic in order to ensure the effective functioning of the Council.

Neither the strengthening of the multilateral system for the legitimate use of force nor improvement in the effectiveness of peacekeeping and nation-building operations will be sufficient to prevent or put an end to civil conflicts or to the collapse of nation-States into ungovernable entities. Neither will multilateral cooperation initiatives against terrorism and international crime be sufficient if we do not establish a new type of multilateral socio-economic governance that will begin to reduce hunger, poverty and inequality among and within nations.

According to the Human Development Report and the World Development Report, between 1975 and 2001 — a quarter of a century — personal income failed to increase more than 3 per cent in more than 100 of the so-called developing countries, preventing billions of people from emerging from poverty. Today, 2.8 billion people live on $2 a day and 1.3 billion subsist on $1 a day. Moreover, during the 1990s, social inequality grew more pronounced throughout the world. According to the Worldwatch Institute, that increase in inequality affected not only personal income but also access to water, food and energy: public wealth essential for civilized life and socio-political stability. Today, the decline in personal income and the increase in social inequality are colliding like two tectonic plates, producing tremors of social disintegration and international anarchy.

It is necessary to reduce poverty, but reducing poverty does not constitute development. We must try to control the damage caused precisely by a lack of development. However, even the modest Millennium Goal of reducing poverty — which is not development — will be far from attained in 2015, as indicated in this year's recent Human Development Report. In fact, at the current pace, we would need nearly 200 years to reduce abject poverty by half in some countries, including many countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa and the Andean region.

In addition to new financial mechanisms and more resources, poverty reduction requires a fairer international trade system in which subsidies for the production and export of agricultural products are eliminated, the food security of poor countries is strengthened and, above all, developing countries receive real and effective differentiated treatment in negotiations of the World Trade Organization (WTO). In short, the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO must address the social deficit caused by globalization and thus prevent further increases in international instability and violence.

The time has come to address these questions with the utmost seriousness. We hope that, when we meet next year to review the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, we will be able to arrive at a clear agreement on the means for attaining the main Millennium Development Goals. Although the Goals are modest, at least they will partially free us from poverty.

We must accept the fact that social exclusion is the primary cause of the violence, the instability, the fragility of democracy and the national and international fragmentation that are spreading throughout the world today. All the reports of the world's highly regarded strategic institutions agree that social exclusion creates violence and civil war. That cause cannot be eliminated unless we ensure that globalization becomes a positive force that provides tangible benefits to all nations and all human beings.

In order to make globalization inclusive, we need to reiterate that the current international system transcends inter-State relations, also including non-

governmental organizations and transnational corporations. That is why we in the United Nations must undertake greater efforts to include these new global actors in the implementation of our decisions; otherwise, many resolutions adopted by the Assembly may not actually be enforced because all the actors of today's world do not participate in them.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): I would like to join previous speakers in thanking Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his highly informative report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1). My delegation is satisfied with the thematic overview of the work of the United Nations in all key areas of its activities.

It is very hard to disagree with the Secretary-General that the United Nations has been through an extraordinarily challenging year. In too many areas, we had to resolve a constant conflict between wishes and resources, between the desirable and the achievable. We faced a long list of problems, but we did not always have a clear vision of how to deal with them.

However, what is clear now is that no country can face the current global threats and challenges alone or hide behind a mask of indifference or passivity. The new reality demands a mobilization of efforts by the entire international community to counter those challenges. We hope that the contributions of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will help us to develop a clearer vision of ways and means for effective collective action by the United Nations.

Despite the past differences over Iraq, this year the United Nations and its Security Council showed unity in addressing the situation in that country. Ukraine welcomes the transition of power to the Iraqis, the formation of the interim representative and executive structures and the clear definition of the role of the United Nations. My country is prepared to assist the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq in carrying out his mission. It is now important to ensure the effective implementation of the timetable for a comprehensive political transition process in the country, especially through the holding of free elections, the drafting of a new constitution and the formation of the transitional government of Iraq.

Ukraine believes that the United Nations should continue to maintain a leading role in promoting global cooperation in the fight against terrorism. We believe the creation of a new efficient system of information-exchange on terrorism would help prevent new attacks and save priceless human lives.

We are pleased to note that the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) has become more proactive in its dialogue with Member States and has improved technical assistance to countries. Ukraine welcomes the Committee's efforts to develop mechanisms for the exchange of information between various international, regional and sub-regional organizations. We also welcome the role played in this area by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and support further strengthening of this structure.

The Secretary-General stressed in his report that the sharp surge in demand for peacekeeping during the past year has posed a serious challenge for the United Nations and could impact the effectiveness of operations. The political commitment of Member States and the contribution of financial and human resources are needed now more than ever, if we want peacekeeping to remain an effective instrument of the United Nations. As one of the major troop-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping operations and the largest troop-contributing country in Europe, my country is ready to remain a reliable partner of the United Nations in this area.

However, we are deeply concerned about the increasing danger to peacekeeping personnel. It is critically important and urgent that we strengthen the protection of people in the service of the United Nations. In this regard, we welcome the Security Council's adoption of resolution 1502 (2003) on the security of United Nations personnel. As one of the initiators urging the drafting of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, Ukraine fully supports the activities of the ad hoc committee aimed at strengthening the Convention's legal regime. We stand for the universal application of the Convention and call upon all Member States to strictly abide by its provisions. Ukraine invites the international community to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. We will submit the relevant draft resolution for consideration in the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly, and we hope that it will enjoy the support of Member States.

We are convinced that HIV/AIDS is one of the fundamental threats not only to human health and well-

being, but, in fact, to world security. We commend the efforts of the Secretary-General and the work carried out by the United Nations and its specialized agencies in combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic. My country initiated the convening of the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, and strongly advocates the implementation of its recommendations. We support the proposal to hold a high-level meeting to review progress in this area next June.

In the area of the protection of human rights and the rule of law, we welcome the appointment of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. The international community must thoroughly study this phenomenon in order to prevent it from happening again.

Last year, the world marked the 70th anniversary of the horrible famine and genocide that took the lives of over seven million Ukrainians. I wish to express once again our profound gratitude to all the States that signed the joint statement on the seventieth anniversary of the Great Famine — Holodomor — of 1932 to 1933 in Ukraine and whose parliaments adopted acts of condemnation and expressed sympathy. We also express our appreciation to all organizations and individuals who took part in the events honouring the victims of the Great Famine.

Almost two decades have passed since Ukraine was struck by the Chernobyl catastrophe, the worst nuclear accident in the history of mankind, which took the lives of thousands of people and continues to have a negative impact on the health and well-being of many Ukrainians. Today, when assistance for recovery from Chernobyl is no less needed than 18 years ago, the international community cannot afford to weaken its efforts with the job half done, but should take practical steps for the sake of present and future generations. My country attaches special significance to the role of the United Nations in the strengthening of international cooperation in mitigating and minimizing the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. The United Nations strategy on Chernobyl, "The Human Consequences of the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident: A Strategy for Recovery," which was launched in 2002, has provided a constructive framework for reinvigorating international cooperation on Chernobyl. My delegation believes that the recent transfer of coordination functions for United Nations Chernobyl-related activities from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will stimulate further resource mobilization and enhance the impact of United Nations activities in this field.

Finally, I would like to highlight the fact that Ukraine, together with other interested delegations, presented an initiative to hold, in the framework of the sixtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly, a special plenary meeting to commemorate the victims of the Chernobyl disaster.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, the Argentinian delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1), which serves as a basis for our current deliberations.

My country would like to reiterate the fact that it values the work that the Organization has been doing with regard to bringing about the rule of law and justice in a multilateral context. Within this framework, we fully agree with the main themes of the Secretary-General's statement in the presentation of his report at the start of the general debate of this fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Respect for international law is a necessary and indispensable condition for the achievement of harmony between nations and between peoples. Argentina therefore supports the peacekeeping operations authorized by the Security Council, the increasing number and complexity of which pose a serious challenge to the Organization's planning and deployment capabilities. Argentina remains committed to contributing troops and police personnel to the Organization's operations in that sphere. Only when we resolve the causes of violence, though, will we be able to attain full respect for international law.

In the area of international law, we would like to highlight the work of the international tribunals, in particular the International Criminal Court (ICC), the international community's principal tool in its fight against impunity. We support the Court, in particular the Office of the Prosecutor, in its task of investigating and bringing to trial those who have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide when local authorities cannot or are not prepared to do so.

At the same time, my delegation would like to reaffirm its encouragement, support and readiness to cooperate with respect to the activities of the United

Nations system regarding the protection and promotion of human rights, including initiatives both to strengthen national human rights institutions and to improve and strengthen international mechanisms for monitoring universal respect for those rights.

Armed conflict and the growing number of natural disasters are causing the proliferation of humanitarian emergencies. Here, we consider that the coordinating role of the United Nations in providing assistance and humanitarian protection should be strengthened. Member States should contribute to this work of the Organization, consistent with their ability and circumstances. States should also guarantee full and unobstructed access for humanitarian personnel to populations affected by humanitarian crises.

The delegation of Argentina would also like to highlight the particular importance of the regional dimension of activities related to the rule of law, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the protection of human rights and humanitarian assistance. In particular, we would like to highlight the work being done in this area by the Organization of American States (OAS), and we consider that there should be greater, more consistent coordination with United Nations activities.

The slow progress in disarmament, violations of non-proliferation agreements, proof of the existence of a clandestine nuclear network and the threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction in terrorist activities endanger peace and international security and could lead to new cases of force being used in a unilateral or preventive fashion, something that Argentina does not want to see happen again. While we welcome the decision of a number of countries to renounce their programmes of weapons of mass destruction, and while we welcome support by States for the Chemical Weapons Convention, it is imperative that States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) address ongoing problems of non-compliance, make the Treaty stricter, and advance its universality.

We also consider that we must redouble our efforts to ensure that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) comes into force as soon as possible. Effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) would undoubtedly help supplement the work under way to reinforce the existing multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation systems.

We feel that the United Nations should continue to provide assistance in implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and in promoting the marking and tracing of small arms and the prevention, combating and eradication of illicit brokering in such weapons. Therefore, we urge the ratification of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The alarming levels of poverty throughout the world not only affect the dignity and the survival of millions of human beings but also hinder the maintenance of international peace and security. The international community's actions to reduce the alarming levels of poverty, channelled principally through the eight Millennium Development Goals, will be insufficient if developed countries do not fulfil the commitments they undertook in the Monterrey Consensus and if they do not provide support for the actions being undertaken by developing countries. For Argentina, like many countries with medium income that do not receive official development assistance, a total eradication of poverty can be brought about only through a fair and just international trading system that will remove tariff and non-tariff barriers for all commodities.

In conclusion, the delegation of Argentina would like to reaffirm its support for the efforts of the Organization and of the Secretary-General in favour of a community of nations that recognizes the human being as the centre of its priorities and bases its action on the rule of law, the promotion of representative democracy, the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and, fundamentally, multilateralism and interdependence as the only solid basis on which to build lasting international peace.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): I wish to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of Malaysia to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and incisive report on the work of the Organization, as contained in document A/59/1. I should like to congratulate the Secretary-General in particular for his initiatives and perseverance to ensure that the United

Nations continues to have a central role in the multilateral decision-making process, in the maintenance of international peace and security and in the promotion of international cooperation.

As described in the report of the Secretary-General, events and developments occurring in the past year clearly demonstrated that the international community and the United Nations have had to confront many challenges throughout an extraordinarily challenging year. Most of those challenges require concerted efforts based on credible and effective multilateral cooperation and understanding premised on the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

The challenges of the maintenance of international peace and security; the further strengthening of international cooperation; the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; the eradication of poverty and hunger; the promotion of trade and sustainable development; the provision of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; the promotion of human rights, democracy, good governance, justice and the rule of law, in particular in post-conflict societies; the fight against infectious diseases; and international efforts to combat terrorism: all of these remain enormous tasks for the United Nations and the international community. The Secretary-General has clearly envisioned the need for a more robust response. For this he has entrusted the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to make bold and practicable recommendations on policies, processes and institutions. My delegation has welcomed the establishment of the Panel and looks forward to its recommendations. We agree that the United Nations has to change in order to better meet current and future challenges and threats.

The call for reform of the United Nations continues to resonate in the General Assembly. During the recent general debate, leaders unanimously called upon Member States to take bold initiatives and steps to ensure a genuine reform and restructuring of the Organization. Reform has to be undertaken in a comprehensive, holistic and objective manner involving all organs and relevant bodies of the United Nations.

My delegation continues firmly to believe that the Security Council must be reformed and restructured to promote democratic practices in its decision-making which would reflect international geopolitical realities and the overall current membership of the United Nations. We wish to reiterate that, besides the question of an increase in the permanent and non-permanent membership categories of the Security Council, the rights and privileges accorded to members — in particular the veto power vested in the permanent members — must be seriously reviewed, with a view to phasing it out completely in due course.

Similarly, the process of revitalizing the General Assembly must continue. This includes making it possible for it to rectify an injustice brought about by the exercise of the veto power by a permanent member of the Security Council, for instance, by way of making certain types of resolutions in the General Assembly capable of setting aside a veto in the Security Council.

In his report, the Secretary-General has elaborated on several armed conflicts and their grim consequences and ramifications. Conflicts remain unresolved in the Middle East, while at the same time longstanding and new conflicts in the African region continue to require the international community's attention. The courageous efforts of the leaders of Africa — through, inter alia, the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism — to address the root causes of conflict and deploy the African Union's own peacekeeping forces in the continent must be commended and supported.

My delegation also takes note of the continuing efforts made by the United Nations and its agencies to assist Member States in addressing the root causes of conflict and in building their long-term capacity for the peaceful settlement of disputes. The increase in the number of peace- building and peacekeeping missions in the past year has also placed great strain on the Organization's resources and its capacity to plan, deploy and manage those missions.

In that regard, my delegation would like to urge Member States to positively respond to the call for sustained political support and for an increase in the financial commitment of Member States, to further ensure the success of United Nations peace-building and peacekeeping missions. We should not shy away from supporting and committing ourselves to the efforts and programmes that are being carried out under the auspices of the United Nations, be they attempts aimed at the prevention or resolution of

conflicts, the provision of humanitarian assistance in conflict areas, or post-conflict peace-building in accordance with the Charter. Malaysia remains committed to supporting United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building activities.

On the situation in the Middle East, Iraq is a clear example of a case where nations cannot go it alone, particularly in the reconstruction process and in efforts to bring about peace and security. Once again my delegation would like to stress that the United Nations has a role, and should be given that rightful role, to play in Iraq. As we see it, what is needed now is the collective will to enable the United Nations to undertake that responsibility in a secure and safe environment. This could then provide an incentive and an opportunity for the States Members of the United Nations to fulfil their obligations and assist Iraq in reconstruction and post-conflict peace-building efforts. Malaysia is prepared to participate under such circumstances.

My delegation strongly believes that the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine remain an important cornerstone of the work of the United Nations. Serious work needs to be done in the General Assembly and in the Security Council, and also by the Secretary-General. We are concerned that efforts in the Security Council have been blocked recently. We are equally concerned at the fact that there are also declared intentions to curtail United Nations activities concerning Palestine in respect of work done in the General Assembly and in subsidiary bodies created by it, as well as work done by the Secretariat and United Nations agencies. The historic advisory opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the occupied Palestinian territory was indeed a great achievement. However, it is most unfortunate, as well as unacceptable, that follow-up action to the advisory opinion has not been taken, including in the Security Council.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territory remains volatile, and the humanitarian situation has deteriorated even further. There is no solution other than the end of Israeli occupation and the creation of a Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, with Israel and Palestine coexisting peacefully side by side within secure and recognized borders.

The United Nations must be allowed to play a role, together with other members of the Quartet, to resuscitate the road map. At the same time the international community must also bring its full weight to bear in pushing for an independent and sovereign State of Palestine. To create an environment of confidence for the speedy resuscitation of the road map, we must seriously consider the approval of the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force or the placement of an international monitoring mechanism to oversee the implementation of the road map. Malaysia urges the Secretary-General to exert greater efforts in that connection.

Malaysia continues to be gravely concerned over terrorist acts and State terrorism, which are capable of undermining peace and security at the national, regional and international levels. Malaysia has extended, and will continue to extend, its full cooperation and support to international efforts to eliminate this scourge. However, my delegation continues to believe that this question warrants an appreciation of its complexity. The issue of terrorism should be approached in a comprehensive manner, namely by formulating a universally accepted definition, identifying its root causes and undertaking appropriate measures to deal with them, as well as working towards universalizing international legal instruments concerning this question. We maintain that the United Nations has a vital role to play in that regard, including in the convening of an international conference on terrorism.

On the threat to international security posed by all weapons of mass destruction, Malaysia is concerned at the slow pace of progress in the process of achieving complete and general disarmament, particularly as concerns nuclear weapons. We believe that, while the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction must be confronted, attention should not be diverted from the need to proceed speedily with the work on disarmament carried out within the United Nations. Malaysia believes also that the problem of small arms and light weapons, which have caused death and injury to millions of human beings, many of them innocent civilians and non-combatants, must continue to be seriously addressed. Efforts must be deployed to regulate and restrict the flow of small arms and light weapons to prevent illicit transfers.

A lot has been said at the United Nations about democracy, justice and the rule of law. My delegation

agrees that the promotion of democracy and good governance, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, are mutually reinforcing. While the rule of law and democratic principles are observed in our own countries, we must find genuine ways and means of ensuring that this is also observed in relations among States. The policy and practice of pursuing unilateral coercive measures as a means of exerting pressure on countries to achieve certain national objectives are clearly contrary to the fundamental principles of democracy, international law and the norms of international relations. They are also often counterproductive. The United Nations should be the forum for resolving such issues of collective concern.

Greater political will and a deeper commitment on all sides are needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. High levels of mortality and the uncontrollable spread of deadly diseases are important issues that require urgent attention. Similarly, the donor community should also increase humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of the millions of people affected by conflicts and natural disasters. This is where multilateral cooperation should work at its best: the rich helping the poor, with the poor committed to helping themselves. There has to be greater North-South cooperation in terms of trade, investment and financing for development. There also has to be a concerted effort to increase South-South cooperation. The United Nations can continue to help facilitate and even spearhead many of those efforts.

The recently launched initiative to reduce hunger and eradicate poverty, as contained in the New York Declaration on Action Against Hunger and Poverty of 20 September 2004, is highly commendable. Similarly, the forthcoming International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be convened in Mauritius early next year, deserves the international community's serious attention and support. Clearly, the international community needs to act more vigorously to eradicate poverty and hunger, eliminate deadly diseases, promote sustainable development and narrow the digital divide. The United Nations system remains our hope for bringing our commitments to fruition.

In conclusion, our hope for a better, peaceful world for all remains with the United Nations. For almost six decades now, the United Nations has struggled to maintain its role as envisaged in the Charter, in spite of the imperfections, shortcomings and constraints generally imposed on it by none other than the Member States themselves. The United Nations is the beacon for multilateralism that needs to keep burning. It needs to be reformed and restructured according to the times and in keeping with current and future challenges. The Secretary-General has constantly reminded us of that.

We believe that under your guidance, Mr. President, the current session of the General Assembly will set the pace for the hard work that is required ahead. Let us respond to the Secretary-General's hope — as reflected in his report — that when we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations,

> "Member States, the Secretariat and other entities of the United Nations system, civil society and business organizations, as well as individuals around the world, will work together to ensure that the anniversary will be worthy of the United Nations and everything for which it stands." (*A/59/1, para. 297*)

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): The delegation of Indonesia is pleased to welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/59/1), which is his annual statement of the response of our Organization to international developments during the year. This report will serve as a good basis for our deliberations on issues of particular importance, especially in the light of next year's high-level meeting.

The Secretary-General has rightly pointed out that the United Nations has been through an extraordinarily challenging year. It has struggled with an assortment of challenges that include the situation in Iraq, terrorism, increased peacekeeping demands and humanitarian emergencies. On the eve of its sixtieth anniversary, our Organization continues to face the menace of poverty, disease and environmental issues.

Despite that, we are pleased that the Organization has continued to be involved in trying to improve the conditions of peoples around the world, in implementation of the Charter. It is gratifying that no matter the difficulties, the United Nations continues to be regarded as playing a central role in maintaining and building international peace and security. The report of the Secretary-General attests favourably to that characterization.

Next year, we will hold the five-year review of the Millennium Declaration and will review other recent major United Nations summits and conferences. Indonesia shares the view that efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals will succeed only if developed and developing countries adopt the right combination of national and international policies and implement their shared commitments as set out in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation on sustainable development.

It is noteworthy that the report of the Secretary-General highlights the holistic approach with which the Organization has assisted vulnerable groups such as women, children, youth, refugees and internally displaced persons, people living with HIV/AIDS and migrants. Those efforts are imperative in helping Member States achieve the Millennium Development Goals, in particular by better coordinating and strengthening all agencies in order to connect the Goals to national policies and strategies.

With regard to HIV/AIDS, the report states that United Nations agencies have embarked on strengthening and coordinating their efforts at the country level. We believe that coordinated action and unified United Nations policy and programme support at the country level will contribute to the efforts to reverse the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS. However, we share the concern expressed by the Secretary-General that resources need to be increased substantially to enable countries to meet the goals set at the 2001 special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS.

In Indonesia, we have been mainstreaming Millennium Development Goals in our national development policy and strategies. The first Millennium Development Goals progress report, published last May, captures Indonesia's situation over the period from 1990 to 2003 and summarizes the challenges, policies and programmes relating to the realization of the objectives.

While we seek, and must continue to seek, the effectiveness of the United Nations in the execution of its mandate, we are all conscious of the point that the Organization must begin by being efficient in its methods and strong in its structures.

For too long, the reform of the United Nations has not progressed much. However, it is reform — not rhetoric — that can position our Organization to perform at its best. The objective of the reform must be to enhance multilateralism, which is the only vehicle through which the complex challenges before us today can be resolved. It is also the only way that the authority, the legitimacy and the credibility of the United Nations can continue to be respected throughout the world.

We must enhance the authority and the role of the General Assembly as the Organization's chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ, which is what it was designed to be. Its relationships with the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council need to be strengthened with a view to ensuring increased cooperation, coordination and the complementarity of the work programmes of the three organs in accordance with their Charter mandates.

Indeed, we must make the Security Council more democratic by broadening its membership to realign it with the geopolitical realities of our time — not those of the post-war period of 1945. We must go further in this process by courageously facing related issues, such as permanent membership and the veto power, in order to make a representative, democratic, transparent, relevant and effective Council.

Similarly, the reform must go far enough to ensure that the role and the authority of the Economic and Social Council, as provided for in the Charter, are not only protected but strengthened. That will enable the Economic and Social Council to play its assigned role and be of key value as a multilateral tool for social and economic progress and development.

In our view, regional organizations are a ready source of support and assistance for the United Nations as it seeks to resolve those issues multilaterally. We believe that strong working partnerships with those organizations will go a long way towards complementing and extending the efforts of the United Nations. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) believes that a network of regional associations working with the United Nations would give a significant boost to the concept of multilateralism.

The strength of those organizations, in addition to being closer to the grassroots, is that they are also becoming more organized and more focused. At the ninth ASEAN Summit in Indonesia last year, for instance, members decided to establish an ASEAN Community, in line with ASEAN Vision 2020, which

will comprise three pillars of cooperation: political and security, economic and sociocultural. Not only can that organization be of greater effectiveness within ASEAN but it can greatly assist in implementing United Nations objectives in the area.

In this connection, permit me also to mention the New Strategic Partnership with the continent of Africa that Asia is promoting in the framework of South-South cooperation. This is the Asian-African Sub-regional Organizations Conference. The Partnership will be launched formally in Bandung, Indonesia, in 2005, in conjunction with the commemoration of the golden jubilee of the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference. We believe such structural partnerships can lead to more effective fulfilment of such multilateral objectives as the Millennium Development Goals and can complement various initiatives, in particular the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

On the subject of terrorism, I would like to restate that terrorism can be defeated, but the approach to seeking that victory must be multilateral and democratic. Efforts must be made to bring along all the nations of the world, because in the end, peace and security are a basic desire of every man and woman. It is also important that the offensive against terrorism be carried out with respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Finally, I want to express the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General and to the staff of the United Nations Secretariat for this report and for the work they continue to do in support of peace and development.

Mr. Bshaina (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Libya wishes to take this opportunity to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/59/1. This report clearly brings out the serious, unflagging, results-oriented efforts to reform and develop the Organization. This comprehensive report, welcomed by the international community, attempts to describe the current international situation, speaks of successes as well as failures in dealing with international events and challenges, and sets forth proposals for achieving more effective solutions in these areas.

In his report, the Secretary-General emphasizes the problems that the United Nations faces in carrying out its mandate in maintaining international peace and security and stresses the increase in demand for peacekeeping activities. We would like to say that State sovereignty must be respected; this principle cannot be violated. For this reason, we strongly oppose a country or group of countries interfering in the internal affairs of other countries under any pretext, including the so-called humanitarian interventions that have recently received certain support.

The United Nations Charter should be the only legal basis for all measures taken to preserve international security. All other actions undertaken outside of this framework are flagrant violations of all international instruments that regulate relationships among States.

The Charter specifically forbids threats or use of force and intervention in the internal affairs of other countries. It clearly details the proper ways of handling all humanitarian problems that might endanger international peace and sets forth the mechanism for this in the General Assembly. We continue to support the strengthening of the Charter's role in resolving international problems, including work in the maintenance of international peace and security. The international community should strive to oppose all attempts to act outside of internationally established mechanisms. To ignore this fact or to close one's eyes to it can serve as a pretext for intervention in the affairs of other States and would lead to the violation of the foundations of international order, including sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of a State.

The report spells out in detail the efforts undertaken to resolve international and regional conflicts and observes that many such conflicts have been resolved through negotiations. It states clearly that prospects for peace in Africa have improved, and in this respect I would like to thank the Secretary-General, on behalf of my country, for his support of African States in these efforts. However, we feel that more efforts must be made to resolve the remaining conflicts and to prevent all crises that could threaten what has already been achieved. We firmly believe that dealing with the root causes of Africa's problems can occur only through an overall approach, giving priority to what Africans see as Africa's concerns. This is why the work of the African Union to end conflicts and the funding required for it are the only solution to dealing with instability in certain States on the continent.

My delegation supports the ongoing revitalization efforts within the United Nations and calls for reform of the organs of our Organization. The General Assembly must work effectively and have the power that would allow it to have leadership and monitoring capabilities, as well as accountability for all other mechanisms and bodies of the Organization, including the Security Council. It is through transparency and respect for multilateralism that we can face the challenges of today's world.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I am taking the floor for the first time before the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and would like to congratulate you upon your election as President.

The present debate provides me with the opportunity to express yet again to the Secretary-General the great appreciation of the Guinean Government for the quality of his leadership at the helm of our institution.

The report now being considered (A/59/1) is valuable in that it provides a thorough summary of what our Organization has done over the last 12 months to respond to the enormous challenges of today. It highlights the limitations and gaps, as well as the consolidation, the increase and breadth of activities conducted in all areas by the international community, particularly in the area of peace and security, economic and social development, humanitarian assistance, human rights and the struggle against all forms and manifestations of terrorism.

My country expresses its support for the positive and encouraging developments in the peace process in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the southern Sudan. Under the auspices of the African Union and its subregional organizations, an epoch of peace, stability and development is taking shape across the African continent that, until recently, had been ravaged by war, conflict, famine and underdevelopment.

My delegation would like to say that it is very pleased by the information and assessment mission carried out by the Security Council in West Africa from 20 to 29 June 2004. The thorough-going exchanges of views during the discussion on 28 June, in Conakry, between the President of the Republic of Guinea, General Lansana Conté, and the members of the Security Council on varied and complex issues certainly indicate both the determination of our Government to work tirelessly to restore peace and security in the Mano River basin and the Council's unflagging interest in helping Guinea to consolidate its peaceful and stabilizing influence in the subregion.

The Mano River Union Summit, held on 20 May and bringing together Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in Conakry, is part of this dynamic. In participating as observers at this summit, the presidents of Mali and Côte d'Ivoire emphasized their determination to work to strengthen peace in West Africa. Here, I would like to fulfil the important duty of reiterating the appeal launched on behalf of my country regarding the reconstruction of the forest zone, which for over 15 years has served as a temporary home for hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons.

In the Middle East, the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians is bogged down as never before. The joint efforts of the international community and the Quartet, in particular, remain futile. My country is now more concerned than ever by the situation in occupied Palestine. We call upon all the parties to fulfil their respective obligations under the road map. We support the idea that all final settlements on the issues of borders and refugees must be negotiated by the parties and be based on the international peace process plan. We condemn all terrorist acts in the region and demand that Israel, the occupying Power, fulfil its legal obligations, which are mentioned in the International Court of Justice's consultative opinion regarding the building of the separation wall.

We must recognize that achieving the goals mentioned in the United Nations Charter involves, among other things, strengthening the institutional capacities of our Organization in the area of conflict prevention and the restoration of peace. It is encouraging to see that this aspect is being taken into account by United Nations country teams on the ground as they develop their programmes, as indicated in paragraph 40 of the Secretary-General's report. My delegation also believes that the increase in the demand for United Nations peacekeeping activities, which is reflected in the creation of new missions, expresses the will of the Secretariat and the Security Council to effectively carry out their respective mandates. However, Guinea strongly believes that the effectiveness and success of United Nations

interventions in the areas of peacekeeping and peace-building are still linked to finding integrated regional approaches that take into account the interdependence of the causes and consequences of conflicts.

While the measures taken by the United Nations and various regional actors to protect peace and international security have allowed, in general, for the alleviation of the suffering of the millions of people who are victims of conflict, my country believes, as does the Secretary-General, that humanitarian aid is, alas, unequally distributed and, what is more, falls short of addressing the real needs of populations. The 20 per cent drop in the total number of refugees in the world between 2002 and 2004 is no justification for the drastic cuts in resources. Amendments must be immediately made to effectively mobilize and manage international humanitarian aid. The provision of international aid must also follow agreed upon principles, basing itself on coherency, effectiveness and accountability. In this context, it is up to the United Nations to pay particular attention to forgotten emergencies and to develop its rapid response systems.

Furthermore, my delegation would like to emphasize the need to constantly keep in mind that efforts under way in countries emerging from conflict must allow for the transition from humanitarian aid to development. In other words, better planning for transition in the countries concerned must be based on the development of a unified, coherent strategy for the entire United Nations system and of a permanent support mechanism for United Nations country teams.

My Government supports the efforts of the Secretary-General for Africa and the appeal to implement his recommendations contained in his 1998 report on the causes of conflicts and the promotion of sustainable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871). We must work, above all, to strengthen our Organization by supporting the Secretary-General's initiatives and innovative and courageous activities which are forward-looking in terms of reforming the main bodies of the United Nations. In this context, the efforts underway to carry out priorities agreed upon at the Millennium Summit and at world conferences in the framework of the United Nations activities continue to be an important and beneficial step in the right direction. Coordinated and sustained actions based on trust and on shared responsibility between the Organization and all of its partners are also necessary in order to reverse negative trends visible in the most vulnerable parts of the world and to promote the progress of all humanity. There is, therefore, a pressing need to continue to work in all areas toward reform, in particular in the main bodies of the Organization. The Republic of Guinea decisively commits itself to this.

Finally, as to the numerous challenges we face, I must mention the relevance of the basic values that underlie the goals of the United Nations through its Charter. Guinea believes that the preservation of these assets is one aspect of the primacy of the rule of law and multilateralism.

Mr. Diarra (Mali): Mr. President, my delegation would like to reiterate our support to you in the accomplishment of your duties. On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the quality of his report and the relevance of his recommendations.

This report, like previous annual reports, calls our attention to old and new threats and challenges that the international community faces at the beginning of this twenty-first century. Of the 30 crises mentioned, more than half of them are of an intra-State nature. Very often, this involves the central Power confronting non-State armed groups, or conflicts between communities. These conflicts are fed by the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, by trafficking in natural resources and by the use of child soldiers. Today, there are 9.7 million refugees and 4.2 million displaced persons around the world because of these conflicts. In July 2004, 16 United Nations peacekeeping operations were deployed throughout the world, accounting for a total of more than 56,000 soldiers. Six of these operations are in Africa. These peacekeeping operations require the political support of Member States and financial and human resources that are very often lacking. This is particularly visible during the post-conflict phase, when the re-launching of the concerned States' economies is a necessary step in order to avoid the resurgence of confrontation. It is therefore appropriate that we reinforce the reconstruction aspect of peacekeeping operations.

Our Organization has understood that a regional approach is often best suited for managing those conflicts. Thus in West Africa the Special Representative of the Secretary-General assessed the crossborder impact of the conflicts raging in the region in order to find comprehensive solutions.

Our Organization has also formed partnerships with regional organizations to prevent and manage crisis situations. Thus, the United Nations has supported the African Union in the creation of the Peace and Security Council and of an African stand-by force. The partnership between the Economic Community of West African States and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa has also been strengthened.

However, in the end, the prevention of armed conflicts is the least onerous approach in terms of human and financial costs. In that regard, General Assembly resolution 57/337 commits the United Nations system to provide increased assistance to Member States to strengthen their capabilities, as well as the capabilities of local institutions and civil society, in the area of conflict prevention.

Current international and regional measures to combat the illicit trade in small arms are also an important factor in conflict prevention. The United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the proposed international convention on marking and tracing of small arms and regional moratoriums and other codes of conduct are all praiseworthy initiatives.

Universal accession to the Ottawa Convention on landmines — which is the focus of the upcoming Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World — and the destruction of those mines by the countries that possess them would save thousands of lives in crisis-affected countries. In that context, we welcome the fact that 46 African countries have become parties to the Convention.

Intra-State conflicts often have their origins in chronic underdevelopment, the lack of social cohesion and the lack of political and economic governance. In that regard, comprehensive and coherent assistance from the United Nations to countries through the United Nations Development Group will assist implementation of the Millennium Development Goals at the national level.

The achievements of biotechnology and information and communication technologies are identified in the report as effective means for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It would therefore be useful to contribute to the success of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, to be held in Tunis in November 2005. I am sure that at the Summit, proposals for the regulation of information technology and funds for overcoming the digital divide will meet with a response commensurate with our expectations, thus narrowing the digital divide between the North and the South.

The report also proposes effectively fighting hunger and poverty by strengthening the capacity of rural inhabitants and their organizations and improving their access to natural resources, technological means of production and to financial services.

In a country such as Mali, where 80 per cent of the working population lives in rural areas, it is necessary to invest in agriculture by improving water control technology and building rural infrastructure. The Economic and Social Council devoted part of its 2004 substantive session to studying that issue. In that context, we welcome the Council's ministerial declaration for resources mobilization for least developed countries. The Human Security Network adopted a declaration on food security last May in Bamako that shares that approach.

Mali endorses the 20 September declaration at the conclusion of the Summit for Action against Hunger and Poverty, an initiative of Brazil and France.

In addition to the lack of rural infrastructure, which seriously hinders development, other natural factors such as cyclical drought and locust plagues exacerbate the already precarious situation of the peoples of the Sahel. The support of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is valuable, but the FAO requires material support to help those people. Therefore, the international community must act quickly.

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals also requires universalizing access to quality primary education. Today, 121 million children throughout the world, including 65 million girls, do not attend school.

Improving medical coverage through the establishment of a national programme for a health decade is also part of ongoing efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. That is another important initiative that the Government of Mali has launched as part of its strategic framework to combat poverty.

To deal with the threat of HIV/AIDS, Mali has launched an ambitious multisectoral programme with the assistance of its partners. The programme

encompasses prevention, treatment and social integration of those affected. In that context, we welcome the actions of our international partners to combat infectious diseases, which are the new threat to developing interactions among States.

We welcome the effective action of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, which was created to deal with the special needs of the vulnerable economies of those countries.

The situation of those countries, a group to which my country belongs, requires a substantial increase in official development assistance and a significant reduction — if not the complete cancellation — of those countries' external debt.

We must also ensure the integration of those vulnerable economies in a more equitable international trade system that is more predictable and more respectful of regulations. That would benefit the sectors of our economies that have a comparative advantage. The Cotton Initiative provides an example.

We welcome the 1 August 2004 framework agreement of the General Council of the World Trade Organization, which gives special treatment to the issue of cotton among the issues related to agricultural subsidies. The contribution of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to strengthen the negotiating capabilities of those countries is also greatly appreciated.

In conclusion, the developments I have mentioned concerning issues of interest to my country amply demonstrate the relevance of multilateralism and the need to find collective solutions. My delegation believes that strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights must continue to be the cardinal values of the Organization. Humankind's well-being must be the goal of all our initiatives. We must protect the moral and physical integrity of human beings, who must be freed from both need and fear. That is the aim of the Human Security and also the belief of my country, Mali.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

United Nations A/59/PV.23

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

23rd plenary meeting
Friday, 8 October 2004, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/59/1)

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization, which details the work of the United Nations in various fields over the past year, analyses current challenges and puts forward some enlightening recommendations that are worthy of serious consideration by all countries.

I should like to focus my statement on four points in connection with the report.

First, with respect to the issue of peace and security, the United Nations, as noted in the report, has been through an extraordinarily challenging year. The United Nations has played an important role in facilitating solutions to the problems of Iraq, the Sudan, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Haiti, and we express our appreciation in that regard. However, it must be acknowledged that there have been setbacks in many regional hotbeds of tension.

At the same time, non-traditional security threats such as terrorism continue to increase, and the United Nations continues to face many difficulties.

The security situation in Iraq remain serious. Innocent civilians continue to suffer from the turmoil, and the peace process and post-war reconstruction still have a long way to go. China believes that the United Nations should play an important role in the peace process and facilitate the holding of successful elections in Iraq. We are in favour of the timely convening of an international conference on Iraq, and we hope that, through such a conference, all parties concerned could resolve their differences, enhance their common understanding and jointly promote security and stability in Iraq.

Prospects for the Middle East peace process remain bleak. Israeli forces recently launched a large-scale military action in the Gaza Strip, and the conflict between Palestine and Israel has intensified. We urge the Israeli forces to withdraw as soon as possible and call on both sides to exercise restraint, resume dialogue at an early date and create conditions for the effective implementation of the road map. The Quartet mechanism should also more forcefully promote such efforts.

During the general debate, most countries referred to the question of Darfur, in the Sudan. Like all other countries, China is very concerned at the humanitarian and security situation in Darfur. We support the African Union's leading role in that context, welcome the efforts made by the Sudanese Government to date, and hope that the Government will continue to make greater efforts and achieve substantive progress key areas.

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The causes of the Darfur problem are complex. The international community should facilitate a solution by constructive means, as sanctions will only further complicate the issue. Over the past year, there has been a noticeable increase in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and the available forces and resources cannot meet the needs in that area. The Secretary-General appeals to all States — especially the developed countries — to provide greater political support, as well as forces and resources, to the United Nations. We hope that the developed countries will take practical action speedily in response to the appeal by the Secretary-General.

Last year, terrorist attacks occurred successively in Madrid, Istanbul, Jakarta, Moscow and Beslan. This demonstrates that terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remain real and serious challenges confronting us. Only by strengthening international cooperation, addressing the symptoms and root causes and avoiding double standards can a solution be found to that problem.

Secondly, on the issue of development, we note that one outstanding feature of this year's general debate is that all countries are more concerned with the issue of development. The overwhelming majority of developing countries have demanded more voice in international economic affairs in order to achieve genuine economic independence. Development is the basis for the advancement of human civilization. Only coordinated, balanced and universal global development can bring about sustained peace and stability in the world. Without prosperity and progress in developing countries, the ideals of peace and stability in the world will remain merely "castles in the sky".

At present, we urgently need to reverse the trend toward a continually widening gap between the North and the South and the ever increasing poverty in some developing countries. The key lies in adapting to the requirements of economic globalization, increasing the weight of the developing countries in decision-making in international economic affairs and establishing a just and reasonable new international economic order, so as to allow globalization to benefit the whole world.

We must establish a complete, open and fair multilateral trading system and push forward multilateral trade negotiations on the principle of mutual understanding and mutual concession. We must also give greater attention to improving the international financial system and promoting the growth of the global economy. Developed countries should shoulder their obligations and responsibilities and provide more support to developing countries in the areas of markets, resources, technologies, debt relief and trade conditions, and should establish an effective global partnership with the developing countries. Meanwhile, South-South cooperation should be strengthened. Developing countries should join in efforts towards self-improvement, participate widely in international affairs and gradually change their disadvantaged position in the process of economic globalization.

The United Nations summit next year will focus on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. We hope the summit will crystallise our consensus, make the international community pay more attention to the issue of development, increase input in the development field and provide new energy in the continuous effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Thirdly, on the subject of multilateralism and the role of the United Nations, we note that there is already a wide consensus on strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations. As pointed out by the Secretary-General in the 3rd meeting, "Let us not imagine that, if we fail to make good use of it, we will find any more effective instrument". China totally agrees with this conclusion. The evolution of the international situation over the past year once again shows that addressing various security threats facing mankind and achieving common development is impossible without multilateralism and multilateral mechanisms centred around the United Nations.

China supports the United Nations in its efforts to keep up with the times and carry out necessary and reasonable reform. The objective of the reform should be to strengthen leading role of the United Nations in international affairs, enhance its efficiency, strengthen its capability to deal with various threats and challenges and better reflect the common voice and needs of developing countries. We are in favour of an appropriate expansion of the Security Council and of increasing the representation of developing countries on a priority basis. We support the work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and look forward to seeing new ideas, new thoughts and

new recommendations on United Nations reform in the report of the Panel.

Fourthly, on the subject of the rule of law in international relations, Secretary-General Annan stressed the importance of the rule of law and elaborated further on this question in his statement to the General Assembly. We endorse the view of the Secretary-General and believe that it is crucially important to adhere to the rule of law in international relations. Whether it be for maintenance of international peace and security or the promotion of development and the protection of human rights, it is always necessary to stick to and respect the rule of law and, in particular, to abide by the United Nations Charter — a kind of constitution for international relations.

Secretary-General Annan pointed out that the countries that claim the rule of law within their countries must also respect the rule of law in international relations. This should be born in mind by all. To apply the rules of international law selectively and only in one's own favour, while disregarding other less favourable rules, does not contribute to the promotion and achievement of the rule of law and justice in the international context. We hope that, with the joint efforts of the Secretary-General and all parties, we will truly achieve the rule of law and democracy in international relations.

Mr. Moungara-Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is very proud and happy to see you, Sir, presiding over the work of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly with such outstanding competence. My delegation would also like to say that it is grateful to the Secretary-General for the high quality and succinctness of the report made available to States on the work of the Organization. We will here touch on the questions of peace and security.

The Secretary-General devotes the first part of his report to questions relating to peace and security, and in so doing, he gives us an opportunity to recall how enormous the challenges are, not only to our security per se, but also to the development and well-being of our peoples. The massive killings perpetrated by terrorist groups, fearing neither God nor man, now pose a serious threat to our collective peace and security. Formerly, terrorist acts were targeted, but now they spare no one. They kill indiscriminately. They kill innocent civilians and military personnel without distinction. Intensifying our campaign against this scourge through cooperation and the implementation of rules on the suppression of terrorist acts is imperative, to say the least.

We need steadfastly to continue the process of general and complete disarmament by putting an end to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This, inter alia, means renouncing the production of fissile materials and tightening controls on the production, trade and use of materials that could be used to manufacture weapons of mass destruction — be they nuclear, bacteriological or chemical. That would reduce the risk of those types of weapons and products falling into the hands of criminal and terrorist organizations.

Relaunching multilateral disarmament negotiations through appropriate mechanisms is critical if we want to eliminate weapons of mass destruction and free the world from the spectre of nuclear war. Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was adopted in July 2001, must continue, both at the national and at the international levels. We welcome the progress that Member States have made in this area by adopting moratoriums against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and by holding the meetings envisioned in the Programme of Action.

Accordingly, consultations on the conclusion of a legally binding instrument regarding the tracing and marking of small arms and light weapons must continue, because, unfortunately, terrorism and armed conflict too are fuelled by the excessive, destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons.

Furthermore, we agree with the Secretary-General's comments about the recent surge in peacekeeping missions. Indeed, the United Nations has been particularly in demand in recent years because of the emergence of new armed conflicts. The capacity of the United Nations in the area of peace maintenance — although there has been significant improvement — is being sorely tried because of the unprecedented surge in demand.

Resources allocated for peacekeeping thus need to be increased substantially, so that the United Nations can respond efficiently to the many demands made upon it. In order to further encourage States to provide

troops, we think that the security and safety of peacekeeping personnel should be reinforced, and that contacts with troop contributing countries should be enhanced. For its part, Gabon will continue to participate in peacekeeping operations, side by side with other Member States.

In his report, the Secretary-General also mentions the contribution by development organizations in addressing the root causes of conflict. While we are grateful to those organizations, we urge them to strengthen their intervention, which forms part both of prevention and of an integrated approach to conflict resolution.

We recall that in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871), the Secretary-General had already noted that unless the causes are eliminated, we cannot truly put an end to conflict. Among those causes we would stress poverty, which weakens and threatens order, national stability and the security of democratic institutions and thus makes countries vulnerable to armed conflict. Therefore, the United Nations must be innovative when mobilizing international support for the development of Member States, particularly the developing countries.

With regard to Africa in particular, we recognize the important reforms that the Africans themselves have undertaken to improve governance, to establish democracy and stability, to combat poverty and disease and to establish the basis of true regional integration, as shown by the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The commitments undertaken by the international community, including the Group of Eight (G-8), in support of NEPAD should be fulfilled in order to avoid repeating the experience of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development in the 1990s.

Concerning reform of the United Nations, my delegation welcomes the results already obtained in the area of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly. But we must strengthen the central role of the General Assembly, which is the most representative principal organ of the United Nations.

While we recognize the significant progress that has been made to improve the working methods of the Security Council, we also need to continue our discussions on expanding the Council in both the permanent and the non-permanent membership categories, in order to make it more representative and much more democratic. The heads of delegation who spoke from this rostrum during the general debate unanimously spoke out in favour of an overhaul of that body, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize the need to ensure proper follow-up to all of our discussions in the United Nations, to put an end to mere rhetoric and to truly act upon the outcome of our discussions.

Mr. Hackett (Barbados): Since, in speaking on this item, this is the first occasion on which I am taking the floor at this session, let me join those who have spoken before me in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly; we pledge our full support to you.

Allow me at the outset to express the appreciation of the Barbados delegation for the untiring efforts of the Secretary-General in leading the work of the Organization during what he has called an extraordinarily challenging year. I would also like to thank him for his very comprehensive report on the work of the Organization over the past year (A/59/1). It highlights some of the main issues and challenges which the Organization has had to face during that period. Barbados welcomes the report and would like to make comments on a few selected issues.

Over the past year, the Organization has had to respond to a number of varied political, humanitarian and economic crises around the globe. Yet the Organization does not possess the overall capacity to enable it to respond effectively to all of those challenges.

That is why the Barbados delegation believes that there needs to be a continuing process of review, reform and renewal of the Organization. In that connection, we eagerly await the report of the Secretary-General on the work of his High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We also welcome the adoption of resolution 58/316, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, and intend to work closely with other States Members of the Organization to ensure that its elements are faithfully implemented. Our work on revitalization, however, is not complete. We need to continue to monitor the

implementation of the resolution with a view to identifying further improvements in the working methods of the Assembly.

Reform of the Security Council is another area on which Barbados believes that increasing emphasis needs to be placed. As the Foreign Minister of Barbados said in her statement in the general debate (see A/59/PV.12), the Council must be made more representative of today's membership of the United Nations, as well as more transparent in its working methods and more democratic in its decision-making.

The significant increase in demand for United Nations peacekeeping operations over the past year reflects, we believe, renewed faith in the United Nations and confirms the role that the United Nations should play in the maintenance of peace and security. In that connection, Barbados welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, and hopes that the Mission will received the necessary resources and support to enable it to perform its mission effectively.

Barbados joins those delegations that believe that the United Nations provides the best framework for international cooperation. We remain fully committed to a renewed emphasis on multilateralism as the main means for the international community to take action in responding to the many and varied global problems.

Barbados recognizes that international terrorism poses a great threat to global peace and security. We share, however, the assessment of the Secretary-General in his report that, for the majority of the world's people, the most immediate threats are those of poverty, hunger, unsafe drinking water, environmental degradation and endemic or infectious diseases.

Given the links between those areas and the Millennium Development Goals, Barbados believes that greater efforts must be made at both the national and the international levels to undertake activities that would facilitate the achievement of the Goals by 2015. We look forward to the high-level meeting to be held next year, which will review progress in the achievement of those Goals as set out in the Millennium Declaration. Barbados intends to participate actively in the review process.

Barbados considers the work of the Organization in the area of sustainable development to be particularly important. We appreciate and welcome the progress that is being made towards achieving the targets in the thematic areas of water, sanitation and human settlements, which were the areas of focus of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development at its session earlier this year.

However, we consider that issues of climate change, disaster management and preparedness and vulnerability need to be assigned a higher priority on the agenda of the Commission's work. Barbados and most of the other island countries of the Caribbean have experienced this year an increase in the frequency and intensity of hurricanes, which have wrought great destruction and have devastated some of our economies. We look forward to the support of the international community, and particularly the United Nations, in identifying means and ways for mitigating the effects of these potentially disastrous weather occurrences, which scientific evidence seems to be suggesting are linked to global warming.

In closing, let me commend the Secretary-General for his efforts at improving the overall administration and management of the Organization. We have noted with satisfaction the initiatives that have been taken to enhance the Organization's ability to respond quickly and effectively to crises and to enhance security, both at Headquarters and in field offices, in the light of increased security threats. The launch earlier this year of the common Internet-based supplier registration and database facility for procurement purposes is also particularly noteworthy, and Barbados looks forward to learning next year about the success of that particular initiative.

We are also encouraged by the observation in the report of the Secretary-General that a significant percentage of reforms proposed in the 1997 and 2002 reform packages have been implemented. We take this as an indication that the Organization is reshaping its capacity to address the global challenges ahead.

Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): As I begin my statement, Sir, I would like to say how pleased my delegation is to see you presiding over the proceedings of our Assembly. Your personal and professional qualities guarantee the success of the fifty-ninth session, and you will enjoy the steadfast support of the delegation of Paraguay.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his detailed report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1). I fully agree that this has been a very

challenging year for the United Nations. Conflicts in various parts of the world, increased demand for peace operations, combating international terrorism and the threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction have been the main focus of the Organization's attention, drawing attention away from the consideration of threats that are more immediate to the majority of the people of the world, such as poverty, hunger, education, deterioration of the environment and endemic or infectious diseases. Those needs call for urgent responses to the legitimate demands of our peoples for a standard of living that is compatible with human dignity.

As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, progress in complying with the Goals set out in the Millennium Declaration has produced some positive results, but overall results are mixed. Paraguay trusts that, by working in solidarity to meet the Millennium Goals (MDGs), we will also contribute to diminishing the causes of violence, and to preventing their misuse by evil-doers who seek to manipulate them as a political tool to distort civilian means of attaining goals that were designed solely to promote the progress and economic and social development of our peoples.

We believe that a sincere alliance between the developed countries and the developing countries, as well as unconditional respect for commitments entered into under the Monterrey consensus, will effectively contribute to achieving the MDGs.

We agree with the Secretary-General that

> "Events over the past year have underlined the continued threat that terrorism poses to international peace and security and the need for broad-based international cooperation to counter it." (*A/59/1, para. 75*)

That is why we cannot fail to reiterate our commitment and responsibility, as Members of the United Nations, to restore to the international community the security and protection it needs.

Our Organization needs the determined support of its Member States and international cooperation, because no one can say that we are immune to the attacks of international terrorism, as facts have shown. But the fight against terrorism must proceed in keeping with the principle of safeguarding and respecting individual freedom, human rights and the rule of law, principles that are unknown to or have been rejected by terrorist groups. We remain faithful to those principles, which will help us defeat international terrorism.

The Republic of Paraguay would like to reaffirm to the General Assembly its full support and cooperation, so that the Organization can play its major role in combating terrorism.

Human rights policy is one of the keystones of the foreign policy of our national Government, and as a member of the Commission on Human Rights, Paraguay continues to be committed to promoting and encouraging full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world, and it will continue to do its work with an independent mind, and in the context of respect for the relevant norms and principles. Similarly, we reiterate our full support for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

During the period covered in the report of the Secretary-General, there has been an increased demand for United Nations peacekeeping activities, which has challenged the Organization to react with the capacity and efficiency necessary to discharge such peace missions. Since the first quarter of 2001, Paraguay has been participating in various peacekeeping operations authorized by the Security Council, and it will continue to do so within its capacities.

Paraguay firmly supports the process of strengthening the United Nations. We believe that that process should continue to focus on revitalizing the General Assembly, strengthening the Economic and Social Council and reforming the Security Council and its methods of work. Our Organization is a tool of the international community that must evolve and adapt to the realities of the new century. The United Nations serves our peoples; it is not for our peoples to serve the United Nations.

That process must ensure the full participation of Member States under conditions of equality, in the most transparent and democratic way possible, as set forth in the Charter. That will ensure that collective interests will prevail over individual interests.

We are encouraged by, and grateful for, the reference made by the Secretary-General in his report to the special needs of least developed and landlocked countries, as well as small island developing States. For the first time in the history of the Organization, landlocked States now have a Programme of Action,

which was adopted in August 2003 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. That Programme was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in order to provide a just response to our special needs.

As trade and development coordinator of the 31-member Group of Landlocked Developing Countries in Geneva, Paraguay will continue to call for special and differential treatment at the World Trade Organization and other trade forums in order to ensure that the products of those countries have access to international markets. We trust we will have the support of Member States in that regard.

In the São Paolo consensus, which was reached at the eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), held in Brazil in June of last year, member States of UNCTAD agreed on the revitalization of the Organization's efforts to, among other things, devote particular attention to the special needs of landlocked developing countries, with a view to somehow compensating them for the disadvantages they face with regard to access to world markets The surcharges we must pay for the transport of both our exports and imports amount to 14.1 per cent of our export income, as compared to 8.6 per cent of the export income of developing countries and 4 per cent of that of developed countries. That, in addition to excessive delays at border crossings in transit countries, results in a severe negative impact on the economic and social development of our countries.

We trust that we will receive the support necessary from international development and financial bodies and from donor countries in order to mobilize the additional resources needed and the innovative preferential terms that will make it possible to carry out the work of building the infrastructure needed to ensure domestic networks and links with transit countries on the way to maritime ports.

Events in the Middle East, and in particular the situation between Israel and Palestine, have not changed in any way that would give one reason to believe that an end is at hand to the spiral of violence, with its increasing toll in lives among both peoples. We therefore urge the parties involved to return to the negotiating table as soon as possible, with a view to resuming negotiations in accordance with the road map and implementing its obligations. Paraguay extends its full support for any efforts to be made by the Quartet.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Paraguay has been following, with attention and concern, recent events throughout the world that have hampered the re-establishment and maintenance of international stability. We should not waver in our determination to dedicate all our efforts and resources to the search for reconciliation and the peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue and mutual understanding, and within the framework of the norms of international law and the rule of international law.

Mr. Toro Jimenez (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for introducing his report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1). The report is an outstanding and useful document, and I shall refer to some of its contents momentarily.

I would once again like to reiterate our country's support and cooperation for the work and efforts of the United Nations during the difficult moments brought about by the invasion of Iraq, which has had devastating consequences for the courageous Iraqi people. We also extend our support and cooperation for the role the Organization will have to play in Iraq with regard to peacekeeping and the maintenance of international peace and security once the occupation ends.

Venezuela believes in the United Nations as the central democratic Organization in a democratic international community devoted to economic and social development and to multilateralism. It is both the vehicle and the platform for the establishment of a multipolar, interdependent and peaceful world. In that context, the primary focus of our efforts is to promote international cooperation in order, in particular, to strengthen South-South cooperation, with a view to achieving the essential goal of combating poverty and exclusion, which are obstacles to our peoples' exercise of self-determination and pose grave threats to the democratic stability of States.

Although we appreciate the fact that there have been some positive results in moving towards the Millennium Summit's Goals, we note that that progress has been uneven. Venezuela understands that the Goals can only be met through concrete economic and social policies and wise Governments that are attuned to the wishes of the people, as well as through the massive mobilization of resources for development, increased

coordination among developing countries and joint efforts between developing and more-developed countries, which bear most of the responsibility for creating a new world where the social and economic progress of peoples has priority. The implementation of measures aimed at eradicating poverty and righting age-old injustice is the requisite for a new world order that is humane and just.

Venezuela has made substantial efforts to combat poverty despite the anti-national and subversive acts carried out in 2002 in my country to attack its democratic stability and institutional development.

The 2003 United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report* noted an increase in Venezuela's rank on the human development index. Life expectancy rose from 72.9 years in 2000 to 73.5 in 2001. The average primary school attendance rate rose from 65 per cent in 1999 to 68 per cent in 2000-2001.

Those encouraging figures are the result of a significant increase in the State budget for health care, education and the implementation of public policies that provide the most needy with basic services, even within their homes, with a view to overcoming the effects of economic setbacks in our country over the past two decades.

In Venezuela, as our President has noted, we believe that, in order to reduce poverty, power must be given to the people. To that end, we are giving power to the people. We are implementing solid programmes of great social impact. Our educational programmes include the Robinson I and II missions for general literacy; the José Felix Rivas programme, targeting the adult population that has been excluded from the formal education system; and the Antonio José de Sucre mission, which brings those who have been excluded from the university system into the higher education system.

We have also implemented such health programmes as the Barrio Adentro plan, guaranteeing access to health care for the underserviced sector of the population suffering from poverty- and neglect-related illnesses; the Guacaipuro mission, designed to involve the indigenous population in society and to ensure recognition of its constitutional rights; the Mercal mission, ensuring the people consistently accessible prices for basic, everyday goods; and the Vuelvan Caras mission, designed to change the nation's socio-economic model, which we have broadened and strengthened through the establishment of the new Ministry of Public Economy — a new public service to ensure the country's comprehensive and endogenous development and thus to free us from the neo-liberal system to which we have been shackled in the recent past.

In brief, the underlying rationale for all those programmes is to eliminate poverty and its gravest consequences and to provide a dignified standard of living for present and future Venezuelans by ensuring — and I stress this most firmly — their genuine participation in the country's economic and social transformation. Thus, our country is taking firm and confident steps on the path towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Human rights can in no way be sacrificed in the fight against international terrorism. Such a sacrifice would be foolish, contradictory and a crime in itself. If Governments met the basic food, housing, health and education needs of their peoples, we could peacefully build a world free of terrorism. Efforts to combat terrorism with more terrorism, violence and repression are futile. The answer to terrorism begins and ends with respect for one's neighbours and their fundamental rights.

In conclusion, we believe that those aspects are critical and require our urgent attention if we are to build the world we seek — a just and equitable world in which there is a place for everyone.

Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization, which allows us to appreciate the important achievements and the limitations and difficulties inherent in meeting the challenges facing the international community.

The Secretary-General has pointed out that this has been an extremely difficult year for the United Nations. My delegation shares that concern and reiterates that the Members of the United Nations must assume their collective responsibilities to ensure that the multilateral machinery, based on respect for international law and not on the predominance of force, functions properly. The collective system we have created is founded on the conviction that respect for international law and the eradication of the use and threat of use of force are critical to ensuring the

coexistence of the peoples of our international community. Given all of our differences and divergences, dialogue and negotiation are preferable to the use of force.

As we approach the sixtieth birthday of the United Nations, we must review history and analyse the Organization's failures that have imperilled the very existence of multilateralism. The United Nations has become an arbiter of peace and security, the guarantor of human rights and dignity, the promoter of economic and social development and the arena in which visions for the future can be expressed in a framework of mutual respect and hope for the well-being of and better days for our peoples. The means currently available will never match the magnitude and complexity of the task.

Ecuador as a whole views with concern the proliferation of conflicts in all corners of the world, affecting millions of human beings. Those conflicts are becoming humanitarian disasters that have a particular impact on the most vulnerable in society: children, women, the elderly and the handicapped. In March, I had the honour to preside over a delegation from the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and I saw the awful effects of war on vulnerable human beings in that fraternal country. When one puts a human face on cold statistics, the magnitude of the tragedy is easier to understand. The proliferation of conflicts in which child soldiers take up weapons and kill before they go to school is one example of that tragedy. When women, the keystones of society, become military targets, that represents an attempt to destroy society. The hopes of thousands and millions are pinned on the decisions adopted in our Hall and chambers, and we must be aware of our ethical and moral responsibilities.

Conflicts have spread and domestic warfare is a new phenomenon of our era. The new frontier for the United Nations is in their solution and in post-conflict reconstruction. Aware of the global nature of the problem, Ecuador has committed its support for the cause of peace and has decided actively to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations. The national Government will support the international community's efforts to protect the human rights of homeless civilians, defenceless women and children, the elderly and the handicapped. We are sending contingents to help rebuild the infrastructure of Haiti, a country by which we will stand in solidarity and humane compassion.

The Conference on Disarmament must resume its role in negotiating arms control and disarmament agreements, stressing the elimination of the weapons of mass destruction that continue to threaten humankind as a whole. The Secretary-General has indicated in his report that he is concerned about slow progress in the disarmament process, violations of non-proliferation agreements, evidence of clandestine networks and the threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction in terrorist activities.

Ecuador attaches great importance to the Organization's endeavours to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, as well as its efforts to eliminate anti-personnel mines.

My country is a country of asylum for thousands of our Colombian brethren who have found in peaceful Ecuador a refuge from a conflict that has repercussions for my country. We are grateful to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and to the United Nations for their efforts, but they are not enough. Ecuador appeals to the international community to support humanitarian efforts and to safeguard peace in our nation.

The people and the Government of my country are convinced that human rights must prevail and that they must be fully respected. We will continue to make progress in formulating an international culture of respect for human beings based on fundamental principles, international treaties, international tribunals and the International Criminal Court for trying human rights violations.

Ecuador has had the honour of presiding over the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. That international instrument is necessary to ensure the full exercise of the human rights of 600 million human beings. I call on all members to support the cause of persons with disabilities so that the convention can be concluded during the coming meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee. In that way, we can ensure that those special individuals enjoy their rights and are protected by the international community.

Poverty, hunger, environmental degradation, lack of water, epidemics, endemic and infectious diseases affect billions of human beings. Such marginalization and structural imbalances in the international architecture will grow worse if we do not take urgent steps to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor — between those who have everything and those who have nothing. This is the real source of violence and despair. Development is the key to giving men and women the opportunity to fulfil themselves as human beings. They must be given the dignity of life. There can be no security without well-being, however many impregnable walls of separation are built along a country's borders. In order to provide greater opportunities, we must address not only international cooperation, but also fair trade, without the multi-million-dollar distortion of subsidies that condemn millions to poverty and despair.

The displacement of millions of human beings in their search for a better life for their families is a phenomenon that deserves worldwide attention. Such men and women are obliged to leave their countries to find work; and they are contributing to the development of the host countries and generating tremendous wealth in those countries. We must find solutions that generate employment, encourage investment and achieve comparable levels of well-being in migrants' countries of origin, with a view to reducing migration, which has such serious social consequences for countries of origin. But above all, Ecuador believes that all countries must respect the human rights of migrants.

Ecuador condemns terrorism in all its manifestations and is cooperating with the international community in combating it. The phenomenon of international terrorism, which transcends national borders, calls for collective effort and international cooperation. We agree with the Secretary-General that the struggle against terrorism must not take place at the expense of fundamental freedoms and the basic dignity of individuals.

In 2003, according to the report of the Secretary-General, there were some 700 natural disasters resulting in 75,000 deaths and in economic losses of more than $65 billion. As a country which is vulnerable to natural disasters, Ecuador highly appreciates the concrete cooperation of the United Nations in this sphere.

We would particularly like to mention the deterioration of the world's climate and the devastation caused by climate change and global warming. Ecuador attaches particular importance to the monitoring and studying of the El Niño phenomenon and has thus decided to participate in the work of the International Research Centre on El Niño in Guayaquil, Ecuador, which will make it possible for the international community clearly to understand this huge worldwide problem.

Despite the huge challenges and obstacles besetting mankind, the international community is helping to build a better world. In this interdependent world, responsibility is shared, as stated in the Charter and as reiterated in the Millennium Declaration. Without a joint effort, there can be no viable solution to the complex problems facing human beings.

The High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, set up by the Secretary-General, will submit its report in December. But decisions for reforming the international architecture can be adopted only by the Members of the Organization. Changes are necessary and essential. The challenges of today are not the same as those faced by the international community 60 years ago, despite what we are told by those who seek to halt the march of time and history. The year 2005 will be decisive in defining the intimate relationship between security and development. Because of the link between the two, we must define a comprehensive agenda which does not exclude the needs of some while advancing those of others. Reforming the international architecture is indispensable.

My delegation reaffirms its conviction that radical reform measures must be adopted to ensure that the General Assembly will be efficient and able to fulfil the mandates and objectives of the peoples represented in it. The Security Council must be more democratic, transparent and representative. The Economic and Social Council must promote human development in its social, economic and cultural dimensions. Reform must extend to the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization.

We would like in conclusion to pay tribute to the victims of the 19 August 2003 attack on the United Nations offices in Baghdad. The safety and security of United Nations personnel must be guaranteed and the blue flag, which represents us all, must be the symbol of respect for humankind.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Each year, during the session of the General Assembly, the peoples of the whole world look to the United Nations with concern as well as hope. People feel concern because their existence is threatened — threatened by intra-national conflicts which ruin and break up grief-stricken families, sometimes forcing them into permanent exile and causing them untold suffering. They are threatened by hunger, disease and poverty. They are threatened by constant violations of their human rights and dignity. And, unfortunately, all of this is the doing of human beings.

Therefore, our peoples look with great hope to the United Nations, which was established to maintain peace and security, to promote development for all mankind and to guarantee respect by all for human rights for everybody. People look to the United Nations and ask, "For how long will this go on?" We are happy that answers to our peoples' supplications are being sought. We are happy that we have a guiding compass here: the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization.

The Secretary-General sets out in his report his vision of humankind's main concerns and questions the most important issues and problems which the United Nations and international community must confront. He describes the work done by the United Nations and outlines future measures for making progress. I pay tribute to the Secretary-General for the exhaustive, comprehensive nature of his report (A/59/1). The report is striking for the tone that it sets and for its humanistic dimension. Indeed, it is a report that focuses on the individual — the individual who has to be saved from conflicts; the individual who has to be freed from hunger and poverty; the individual who has to be protected from economic insecurity; the individual who must finally be liberated from violations against his person and his rights. It is, therefore, a rich document that is full of inspiring lessons, and the strength and depth of the statements that we have heard during this discussion testify to that.

At this point in our discussion — as I am the last speaker, this is the final meeting on this subject and this is the last day of the week — I am simply too late; everything has already been said, often, quite well said, and, sometimes, excellently so. Therefore I will not be making my prepared statement. I am all the more happy not to do so because we will have an opportunity to come back to all of the questions that have been raised in the report.

Allow me, however, just to give some idea about Cameroon's concerns. First, we are grateful to the Secretary-General for having devoted part of his report — indeed, the largest part — to Africa: to what the United Nations has been doing to bring peace to that continent and what take steps it is taking to diminish poverty there. In so doing, the Secretary-General aligns his activities and concerns squarely with the Millennium Declaration, in which global leaders expressed their commitment to give special priority attention to Africa's needs.

Regarding peace, we must say that considerable progress has been made. Apart from armed conflicts in six or seven countries, Africa is experiencing a relatively stable political situation. That is in contrast with the situation Africa experienced in 1998 when the Secretary-General published his report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/52/871). Briefly, it will be recalled that at the time there were armed conflicts and civil wars in 14 African countries and serious crises and political disturbances in 11 others. The work of the United Nations in support of African efforts has done a good deal to restore stability in Africa.

I am also pleased to pay tribute to the activities of the Secretary-General in our subregion and, in particular, his personal involvement in certain situations covered in his report, notably, in paragraph 29, where he states:

> "With regard to United Nations support for the peaceful resolution of potentially violent conflicts, I was pleased with the significant progress achieved by Cameroon and Nigeria, with the assistance of the United Nations, in the implementation of the October 2002 ruling of the International Court of Justice on the land and maritime boundary between the two countries. This progress was achieved within the framework of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, which I established at the request of the heads of State of the two countries ... [T]he withdrawal of the civilian administration, military and police forces by each of the two States from areas falling within the sovereignty of the other and the corresponding transfer of authority, as called for

by the Court, will enhance cooperation between Cameroon and Nigeria."

I hope that the international community will continue to exert its influence so that the land of peace and cooperation, so long awaited, will finally arrive.

The progress made towards peace is encouraging, but, on the other hand, we are concerned that sub-Saharan Africa will not greet the year 2015 having reached the Millennium Development Goals, notwithstanding an average growth rate of about 4.5 per cent. We are told that it will have to wait until 2147 to attain those goals — that is, the middle of the twenty-second century. We will come back to that issue when we consider sub-item (a) of agenda item 38, on progress in implementation and support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

I am coming now to my last point, which is cooperation between the United Nations and international regional organizations. We welcome the ongoing strengthening of such cooperation, particularly with regard to Africa with the Economic Community of West African States, with the Southern African Development Community and with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. We would have hoped that the report might have included some mention on cooperation with the Economic Community of Central African States. Our expectations were particularly strong because in his report last year the Secretary-General announced that, at the request of the Security Council, he had dispatched an inter-agency mission to Central Africa to evaluate ways and means to lend greater momentum to this type of cooperation. We are sure that when we consider the agenda item on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, the report will be available, that we will be informed about the great harvest that was gathered by that inter-agency mission that was sent to our part of Africa.

Those are just a few brief points that my delegation wanted to cover in considering the report of the Secretary-General.

This morning I read a study about fanaticism. Yes, we are living in a world that is characterized by fanaticism, a fanaticism that rejects those that are different, that rejects open-mindedness, that rejects the idea of sharing. Fanaticism is therefore the very origin and source of conflict. In order to combat fanaticism we need to cultivate and practise faithfulness to the individual.

As African wisdom has it, the past and the present become one in our will to preserve humankind. Today more than ever we are in duty bound to reaffirm our loyalty to our peoples and to build a future for them — the future that our heads of State mapped out at the Millennium Summit. We must build a world in which humankind will finally be free from fear — all fears - and free from want; that is, a world of peace.

That is the message we have gleaned from the report of the Secretary-General. That will also be our response to our peoples, who are fearful because their lives are at risk — our peoples who, each year, when the General Assembly is in session, look to the United Nations pleadingly, asking us: "For how long? For how long?"

Why, even at the heart of violence, does humankind not turn its back on the utopia of peace?

The President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/59/1?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 10.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

United Nations A/59/PV.24

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-ninth session

24th plenary meeting
Monday, 11 October 2004, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 113 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/59/421)

The President (*spoke in French*): If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I would like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 9 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 59/1).

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 113.

Agenda item 7

Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/59/335)

The President (*spoke in French*): As members are aware, in accordance with the provisions of Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations,

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and with the consent of the Security Council, the Secretary-General is mandated to notify the General Assembly of matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security that are being dealt with by the Security Council and of matters with which the Council has ceased to deal.

In that connection, the General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General issued as document A/59/335. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 11 and 53

Report of the Security Council (A/59/2)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on Sir Emyr Jones Parry, President of the Security Council, to introduce the Council's report.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry: On behalf of all members of the Security Council, I would like to offer my congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. It is my sincere hope that during your tenure, relations between the Security Council and the General Assembly will continue to develop and strengthen as both bodies move forward to meet the many challenges facing the international community in the twenty-first century.

I have the honour today, as President of the Security Council for October 2004, to introduce the annual report of the Council (A/59/2) to the General Assembly. The report I am presenting today covers the period from 1 August 2003 until 31 July 2004. The introduction to the annual report, prepared by Romania in its capacity as President of the Security Council in July, sets out in detail the Council's activities for the period under review.

As members will see from the annual report, the Security Council has addressed a wide range of conflicts, threats to peace and security and the United Nations peacekeeping operations established to restore stability in those situations. The report gives a comprehensive description of these activities, and I would like to highlight here today some of the key issues on which the Council has focused.

West Africa saw progress in peace-building efforts, but also outbreaks of violence and political crises. The Security Council has worked hard to develop strategies to deal with those complex situations by encouraging all parties to engage in political negotiations and to avoid resorting to armed violence, particularly against unarmed civilians and children. Council members underlined that message during their mission to West Africa in June. They welcomed the continued improvement in the consolidation of security in Sierra Leone, with the completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, followed by the start of trials at the Special Court. Improvements in the overall security situation in Liberia, as the United Nations Mission in Liberia deployed throughout the country, permitted the process of disarmament and demobilization to start re-integrating ex- combatants back into society.

As the report to the General Assembly makes clear, achieving sustainable peace and development in post-conflict situations like those in West Africa requires a collective approach. It is vital that the various parts of the United Nations family coordinate their efforts — including with other stakeholders outside the United Nations — to pursue common goals and a comprehensive, integrated strategy. That strategy must encompass the transition from peacekeeping to peace-building, rule of law and development, if we are to create the conditions for lasting stability.

Despite those positive indicators, much still needs to be done to bring tranquility to the African continent – too many conflicts rage with innocent civilians and children caught in the middle. The transition process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains intact, but has faced a series of destabilizing incidents and challenges. On 22 June 2004, the Security Council invited the Secretary-General to consider enhancing the rapid reaction capacity of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). Consideration of MONUC's capacity and future mandate continued throughout August. In Côte d'Ivoire, the Security Council strongly condemned violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and requested the Secretary-General to establish an international commission of inquiry to investigate all human rights violations.

Council members became increasingly concerned by reports of large-scale violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Darfur, the Sudan, and about the potential that had to derail the north-south peace process in that country. In response to those reports, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement on 25 May (S/PRST/2004/18), and resolution 1556 (2004) on 30 July 2004. The resolution called upon the Government of the Sudan to fulfil all the commitments made in the joint communiqué of 3 July 2004 and for the rebels, without preconditions, to negotiate a political settlement. The Secretary-General will continue to report to the Security Council on compliance with resolution 1556 (2004), as well as on the situation in the Darfur region. The Council also adopted resolution 1547 (2004) on 11 June, authorizing the Secretary-General to establish a special political mission in the Sudan to prepare for a peace support operation following the signature of a comprehensive peace agreement.

The Security Council considered a number of issues relating to civilians affected by armed conflict, including the protection of civilians in armed conflict, HIV and AIDS, mine action, children affected by armed conflict and women, peace and security. The output of that work included two resolutions. In August 2003, following the bombing of United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, the Council agreed on an unprecedented resolution on the protection of humanitarian personnel in armed conflict. In April 2004, the Council agreed on a further resolution on children affected by armed conflict, calling for concrete steps to be taken in situations on the Council's agenda where there are egregious violations of children's rights.

In addition, the Security Council debated other issues related to the maintenance of international peace and security, including justice and the rule of law; post-conflict national reconciliation; the role of business in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building; United Nations peacekeeping; complex crises and the United Nations response; the role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building; cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in stabilization processes; and civilian aspects of conflict management and peace-building. One recurring theme of those debates was the need for greater interaction between the Security Council and the other bodies of the United Nations, as well as with other regional and international organizations, to ensure a coherent, collaborative approach to establishing and maintaining peace and security.

The coordination of international efforts for the design of long-term development strategies to achieve and sustain stability has also been the approach adopted with regard to Haiti. By its resolution 1542 (2004), besides addressing security and political aspects and the human rights situation, the Council emphasized the need for the international community to contribute to the promotion of social and economic development in that Caribbean country.

On 7 April 2004, on the occasion of the commemoration of the Rwanda genocide, the President of the Security Council addressed the General Assembly on behalf of the Council (see A/58/PV.82). In that statement, the Council, inter alia, expressed its support for the nomination of a special adviser to the Secretary-General on the prevention of genocide.

Iraq's political transition featured prominently in the Security Council. On 8 June, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1546 (2004), endorsing the formation of a sovereign interim Government, defining the United Nations role and setting a clear path for the future political process. That path included the formation of a sovereign interim Government of Iraq by 30 June 2004; the convening of a national conference to select a consultative council; the holding of direct democratic elections no later than 31 January 2005 and the drafting of a permanent constitution leading to a constitutionally elected Government by 31 December 2005.

The Council also decided in resolution 1546 (2004) that, as circumstances permitted and as requested by the Iraqi Government, the United Nations would play a leading role: assisting in the convening of the national conference; advising and supporting the process of holding elections; and promoting national dialogue and consensus-building on the drafting of a national constitution.

On 28 June 2004, the Security Council welcomed the handover of full responsibility and authority for governing Iraq to the fully sovereign and independent Interim Government of Iraq.

On Afghanistan, the Security Council received regular briefings and reports from the Secretary-General and the Department of Peacekeeping

Operations. Throughout those discussions, the Council continued to stress the importance of a secure environment for free, fair and credible democratic elections, scheduled for 9 October 2004. Linked to that was the Council's continued focus on the need to accelerate progress on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants in Afghanistan. On 13 October 2003, through resolution 1510 (2003), the Security Council authorized the expansion of the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force to allow it, as resources permitted, to support the Afghan Transitional Authority and its successors in the maintenance of security in areas outside Afghanistan's capital, Kabul. On 26 March 2004, the Council also extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for an additional 12 months.

The Security Council continued to consider the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on a regular basis, in particular with monthly briefings by the Secretary-General or his representatives. In November 2003, the Council adopted resolution 1515 (2003), endorsing the Quartet's performance-based road map towards a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Council also continued to follow the aspects of the conflict in the Middle East between Israel and Syria and between Israel and Lebanon.

The threat to international peace and security by acts of terrorism throughout the world remained a high priority for the Security Council. The Counter-Terrorism Committee continued to work intensively, and has now evolved to assume a more proactive role in its dialogue with Member States in order to evaluate the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). The revitalization of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in February 2004 will enable the Committee to take on a more operational and visible approach in order to strengthen the global international consensus in the fight against terrorism.

Related to that, the Security Council tackled a threat that had not been tackled before. Resolution 1540 (2004), adopted on 28 April 2004, fills a gap in the international community's defences relating to the risk that weapons of mass destruction might fall into the hands of non-State actors. The Council attaches importance to the fact that the adoption of the resolution was preceded by a series of intensive consultations and discussions with Council and non-Council members. That was a concrete demonstration of the importance the Council attaches to the views of the wider United Nations membership.

The Security Council remains focused on the need to build upon past years' levels of transparency. When possible, public sessions of the Council were held, wrap-up meetings hosted and thematic debates in the Council used to enhance our collective understanding of the key issues affecting the international community at large. That emphasis on transparency is invaluable to the Security Council in order to enable the wider United Nations membership to interact more fully with the Security Council.

To make it more readable, the report before the Assembly is shorter than in the past. I also recognize that the demand from non-Council members for more information on the Council's activities will increase. The Security Council will be attentive to the comments of Members on the report before the Assembly today in the debate that will now follow.

In concluding, on behalf of all Security Council members, I would like to thank members of the Assembly for this opportunity to introduce the Council's report. I would also like to express the appreciation of all Security Council members for the work of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat at large. Their tireless professionalism, often in dangerous locations throughout the world, assists the Council to fulfil its role as set out in the United Nations Charter.

If I may, I shall now say something in my national capacity. I would like to make a short statement on the other agenda item being jointly debated, namely, the question of equitable representation on the Security Council and related matters.

One clear message that can be drawn from the overview that I have just given is that the Security Council's primary role in maintaining international peace and security is as important as it has ever been. The Council is active across the broad range of threats to international peace and security, both in managing individual crises around the world and in addressing the generic problems that face societies in conflict. The United Nations membership as a whole has a shared interest in a Council that is credible, effective and decisive.

The United Kingdom believes that the Security Council would be strengthened by an increase in its membership to ensure that it better represents the modern world. As the British Foreign Secretary reminded us in his speech to the General Assembly at its 8th meeting, on 23 September, the United Kingdom has long supported the case for expanding the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. We support including Germany, Japan, India and Brazil among the permanent membership. We also want to see a permanent member from Africa on the Council. An increase in the non-permanent membership also offers the chance to further enhance the voice of the developing world in the Council's discussions. This is a reform that we have been discussing for many years, and one that the United Kingdom believes is now long overdue. We would encourage all Member States to engage constructively in the debate in order to find a solution on which all can agree.

As well as reform to the Council's membership, the United Kingdom has continued to work for increased transparency, accessibility and accountability in the Council's work. Our debate today is part of the developing relationship that exists between the Council and the General Assembly, as well as other parts of the United Nations system, such as the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat. Many of the subjects on which the Council is engaged, such as the establishment of justice and the rule of law, may equally engage the responsibilities of the principal bodies of the United Nations.

The United Kingdom looks forward to the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. It is vital that the United Nations evolve to respond to the range of changing threats and opportunities that face the whole membership — from, for example, HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation to terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. A responsive and effective Security Council is a vital part of that picture. We would encourage the Panel to ensure that its proposals reinforce the Council's ability to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter.

Mr. McIvor (New Zealand): I have the pleasure of making this statement on behalf of Australia, Canada and my own country, New Zealand.

This is the first time that our group of countries has made a joint statement in plenary meeting on the two items under discussion. It reflects our commitment to efforts over the next 12 months towards reaching agreement on Security Council reform, and our shared positions on a range of issues about the working methods and transparency of the Council.

We would first like to thank the Security Council and the Secretariat for the work that has gone into the preparation of this year's report. It seems that the workload of the Security Council is increasing in both intensity and volume each year, which has implications for us all. Australia, Canada and New Zealand have the following comments on the Council's report, with some suggestions on future action.

First, on the transparency of the Security Council's work, we welcome the number of open meetings over the last year and ask that a greater proportion of such meetings be held in the future. Open meetings and briefings are crucial to allowing information to flow between the Security Council and the wider United Nations community. We think they improve both the quality of the Council's decision making and the membership's understanding of the Council's work. Early distribution of the monthly programme of work, even in draft form, is important in that regard, particularly for small missions with limited resources.

Secondly, although there have been some steps in the right direction, there is still a long way to go in improving Security Council consultation with the wider membership. While we fully recognize the need for timely decision-making, the Council must seek the views of Member States before taking decisions on issues that affect them, particularly decisions that impose obligations on Member States to act. That is particularly the case with respect to countries contributing troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations. The onus is on the Security Council to initiate that dialogue at an early stage and to avoid presenting the membership with a fait accompli. Discussions need to be meaningful, not lip service.

The reform of the Security Council remains a key issue. There is widespread support for expansion of the membership of the Council, but no consensus on the issue of new permanent membership. The President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session worked hard to advance the discussion, but the Open-ended

Working Group effectively remains deadlocked. There is no realistic prospect that the Working Group on its own can achieve agreement. We will not rehearse here the arguments in favour of a larger, and therefore more legitimate, Council. Our countries have individually set out our national positions on Security Council reform on a number of occasions, most recently in statements during the general debate.

Australia, Canada and New Zealand hope that a proposal of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will provide a basis for a successful negotiation on a more representative Council. The Panel has been asked by the Secretary-General to provide independent recommendations on that and other key issues facing the United Nations. We urge Member States not to seek to pre-empt the Panel's report, but rather to respect the Panel's independence and keep an open mind on possible ways forward.

Australia, Canada and New Zealand are prepared to be flexible. We agree that reform must involve an increase in non-permanent membership and that there can be no extension of the veto. We look to enhanced opportunities for Security Council membership for all Member States, not just a privileged few.

We recognize how important Council reform is to Member States. We also share concerns that deep-seated differences on that matter not hold up a package of reforms aimed at strengthening the United Nations and enhancing its ability effectively to meet current and future challenges. But that does not mean that we think this issue should be considered separately. First, including Security Council reform within a broader package may increase rather than decrease the prospects of achieving consensus on it. Secondly, the Security Council is at the core of the United Nations response to threats to international security. At the same time, the Council has expanded the range of issues that it determines constitute threats. Accordingly, proposals for enhancing collective action in dealing with a broad spectrum of threats cannot sensibly be separated from the issue of the representativeness of the Council. What the Council does, and who is on it, are inextricably linked.

As important as the structure of the Council may be, what is no less critical is the manner in which it represents the interests of the global community in whose name it speaks and acts. It is a community comprising individual human beings as well as States. Accordingly the Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security must, as the Council has recognized incrementally, include the security of individual human beings as well as nations. In that context, we welcome references, such as that in resolution 1564 (2004), underlining that a Government bears the primary responsibility to protect its population within its territory. We would add, however, that the Council cannot ignore its obligations if the actions of a State violate that responsibility. What we seek is the evolution of international law and practice so that multilateral action may be taken in situations of extreme humanitarian emergency.

It is worth remembering that membership in the Security Council is not the only way to influence, and broaden the basis of, Council decisions. We should consider further changes in the operation and practices of the Council to allow non-members to make greater input to Council deliberations. There has been some progress with respect to peacekeeping issues in that regard. Consultation, however, must be meaningful. We should also look more closely at the relationship between the Council and other bodies of the United Nations.

This leads us to a final point. We have noted that the Council's agenda is busier than ever. The Council focuses on acute threats to international peace and security. But there is a need for better arrangements to provide more effective and coordinated United Nations oversight of international peace-building efforts in post-conflict situations over the longer term. That oversight would need to involve a wide range of players. We look forward to future discussion on that and related issues once the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change has reported at the end of this year.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council today is undoubtedly the United Nations body that has most increased its power. It now has 17 peacekeeping operations under way, of which 11 were established since 1991. Those peacekeeping operations currently have a dominant impact on the Organization's budget. The number of Security Council resolutions has risen from 646, during its first 44 years of existence, to over 1,000 today. Similarly, the Council's area of competence includes not only international conflicts but also civil disputes, nation-building, terrorism, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and other topics such as women and

children in conflict situations, the protection of civilians in armed conflict and small arms and light weapons. Given the current importance of the Council, in my statement I will first take up the character of Security Council reports to the General Assembly before turning to the Council's working methods and, lastly, the issue of equitable representation.

With regard to the Security Council's reports to the General Assembly, Peru appreciates the efforts made to improve the character of the introductions of those documents. Nevertheless, the report of the Security Council continues to be descriptive in nature and contains only a chronological account of the measures taken by the Council. It does not assess difficulties, progress, setbacks or current trends in resolving the conflicts posing a threat to international peace and security. If the report of the Security Council is not analytical in nature, as that of the Secretary-General is, no one can know whether or not the security conditions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have changed since the adoption of resolution 1565 (2004). Nor can we know, for example, the impact of the enormous quantity of drugs produced in Afghanistan on the national reconstruction process in that country. Likewise, it is impossible to know whether or not the current insecurity in Iraq has an effect on the possibility of providing United Nations electoral assistance in accordance with resolution 1546 (2004). We know even less about whether or not the trials in the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia have contributed to reducing impunity in the world.

If the report of the Security Council were read today by journalists, students of international relations or the public at large, none of them would get an assessment of the progress, setbacks or trends in the conflicts threatening peace and security in the world. It is therefore necessary to produce a Security Council report that has the virtue of being understood by international public opinion in order that it may be disseminated by the press and discussed in international academic circles, as are the analytical reports on human development, the World Bank's reports on development and the report of the Secretary-General, all of which are known throughout the world. But, today, it is no exaggeration to say that no one but us is aware of the report of the Security Council.

We therefore need a report that connects the Security Council not just to the General Assembly but also to all of humankind. That would make it possible for the Security Council's peace efforts, and their limits, to be known. All of that would provide a sense of reality and help to dispel the bad impressions that arise with regard to the work of the United Nations in instances when the Council does not quickly resolve a conflict threatening international peace and security.

I should now like to turn to the second subject of my statement, namely, the working methods of the Council. We should today recognize that the Council has been reacting better to new and complex crises, making it possible for States that are not members of the Council and members of international civil society to participate. Among the Council's most valuable methods of work today is the practice of carrying out visits to the field, above all in order to obtain a real understanding of civil conflicts. Those visits should be improved by enabling the Council to establish good connections with civil society, as well as with local, political and religious groups in countries in conflict. The Council should also seek to connect with officials of the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and regional organizations familiar with the socio-political situation in the country in conflict being visited. Those visits should also be proactive in nature. They should not only be held once a conflict has broken out, but also when there is information indicating that there is a threat of civil war or of massive violations of human rights.

The Council must not continue to react simply to specific events in civil conflicts. It must instead carry out an in-depth analysis of the structural causes of those conflicts. Today, for example, all recent strategic analyses agree that social exclusion is the main factor that turns political, ethnic and religious rivalries into intense civil conflicts, which, in turn lead to real wars of national depredation, in which the most heinous crimes against humanity are committed. For that reason, the Council's field visits should be properly prepared, above all to gather information about the degree of social exclusion in the country visited. If account is not taken of social exclusion in order to resolve and prevent conflicts, we would be ignoring the most important structural component of international violence.

We believe that multilateralism cannot be divorced from reality. It is in that context that I would like to conclude by addressing the issue of equitable representation in the Security Council. For 10 years

now, all countries concerned have been putting forth their positions with regard to expanding the membership of the Security Council, but with no results. The most recent report of the Open-ended Working Group on the subject illustrates the fact that there are as many positions as there are countries. It is clear that there is no consensus; and without consensus there can be no reform. It is as simple as that. We must be realistic, given the situation. The lesson of 10 years of Council reform is that the more we debate reform, the more points of disagreement we express.

For example, at the moment there is not even consensus on the definition of what constitutes a regional group. Nor is there consensus about the criteria for membership of the Security Council. The path that reform is taking is a sterile one that satisfies no one. In terms of realpolitik, the only thing clear in the entire 10-year exercise is that no reform process can be carried out without a minimum level of commitment among the five permanent members of the Security Council. That means that, for the reform exercise to cease being sterile, the permanent members of the Security Council need to make a joint effort to arrive at a basic level of agreement as to what they consider to be viable Council reform. We must start with at least a minimally acceptable formula that is veto-proof. If such a compromise is not possible, then, in the final analysis, we will have to be realistic and abandon the reform. What we cannot do is to continue as we have been with a sterile exercise that goes on for years, because that can bring discredit to the United Nations.

All of the thoughts I have shared in order to improve the report, working methods and reform process of the Security Council are a reflection of Peru's commitment to the effectiveness of the Security Council — and hence our desire to be elected by the General Assembly next year as a non-permanent member of the Council, so that we may continue to make suggestions and contributions to improve the functioning of the Council.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I would like very sincerely to thank Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry for his excellent presentation of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/59/2). We have always believed that the Assembly's consideration of the Security Council's report should not be a mere formality and that it should provide the General Assembly with a valuable opportunity for an in-depth analysis of the Council's activities, as well as to identify the measures that should be taken to make the necessary improvements in the working methods of that important body. That interaction is also in the very interests of the Security Council, which should benefit from it by considering and using the ideas and constructive and innovative proposals that I am convinced will emerge from this debate. As is its prerogative, the Assembly could even take any action it considers appropriate at the end of this debate.

With regard to format, I am pleased that the report now contains an analytical section on the work of the Council in order to respond extensively to the comments and criticisms made in that regard by Member States throughout the years in this forum. The document before us indeed contains elements that are of interest to all Members of the United Nations.

In preparing the annual report this year, we the members of the Security Council set ourselves the goal of ensuring the best possible understanding of the issues before the Council. However, we are aware of the fact that the report is still far from being the substantive document that members of the United Nations need to assess the work of the Council. Algeria will continue to work with other members of the Council to see to it that, in the future, the analytical part of the report provides indicators of the results of the Council's work, as well as a section devoted to proposals aimed at improving its work. Since Algeria joined the Security Council we have worked actively to bring about both greater transparency in the Council's working methods and further democratization in its decision-making process.

With regard to the functioning of the Council, it should be said that a significant number of Council members made efforts during the period under consideration to improve both exchanges with all members of the United Nations and the transparency of that body's working methods. In order to limit the secrecy in the Council's work, a concerted effort was made to improve the dissemination of information about the activities of the Council and to hold more open briefings in order that non-members of the Council can benefit from the information provided by the Secretariat on various situations and conflicts and express their opinions on the decisions taken.

However, Algeria continues to believe that it would be wise, on a case-by-case basis, for the

consultations preceding those meetings to be open to parties interested or involved in the question under consideration in order to obtain their views. That would allow the Security Council to have a better understanding of the subjects under consideration and to take its decisions with better background information at hand. It is also important to relaunch the holding of wrap-up meetings open to non-members of the Council, even if only on a quarterly basis. We believe those meetings provide an opportunity to express views on issues of interest in an analytical, systematic, open and frank way.

During the negotiation of important resolutions — such as resolution 1540 (2004), on non-proliferation — Algeria had an opportunity to express strong reservations about the trend of the Council to become an international legislator and to replace the intergovernmental negotiating process. The Council should only adopt temporary rules to be imposed on all States in exceptional circumstances, such as to respond to situations that dangerously imperil international peace and security or in the absence of legal standards. Along with other members of the Council, my country has also expressed concern about the ease with which the Security Council now resorts to Chapter VII of the Charter, including in situations where it is not appropriate to do so.

With regard to substance, the report illustrates that, in the period under consideration, the Council has not only reacted to threats to international and regional peace and security, but has sometimes also taken direct action to address the large number of problems affecting the world. It has demonstrated determination and follow-up in dealing with certain issues. We believe that Security Council missions to areas in conflict or emerging from it, such as last June's mission to West Africa, have been extremely useful, because they have tackled the heart of the problems and enjoyed the support and cooperation of the parties concerned. Those missions have had a positive impact on local actors. Given such successful experiences, we encourage this type of initiative and action and call for them to be formalized and expanded to other conflict areas.

However, we would like to point out that in situations that were not a threat to international peace and security, the Security Council went beyond its mandate and acted inappropriately, as it did on 2 September 2004 when it adopted resolution 1559 (2004) on the situation in Lebanon. At the same time, we noted with regret that, although action needed to be taken to stop a bloodbath in the occupied Palestinian territories, the Security Council was, to say the least, hesitant, and did not display the necessary firmness and determination. More serious yet, we saw an implicit endorsement by some Member States of non-respect for resolutions. That certainly compromised the Council's authority. In that regard, we regret the fact that certain important Security Council resolutions have remained dead letters and have not been followed by action. That state of affairs often encouraged the recalcitrant party vis-à-vis the settlement of a conflict in a given situation to continue to defy the Council's will and to attack its credibility.

With regard to the Middle East, where the Council has a great responsibility, despite the adoption of many resolutions and a monthly meeting devoted to the subject, the Council was not able to make any notable progress to encourage or facilitate the peace process, or even to ensure the protection of the Palestinian population of the occupied territories. The case of the non-adoption of the recent draft resolution on Israel's deadly operation against the Palestinian population in Gaza, which I put forward a few days ago, was the twenty-ninth instance of the Council being paralysed by a veto and illustrates the powerlessness of the Security Council in discharging its responsibilities. We are convinced that, had the Council shown the necessary firmness with regard to Israel, the violence could have been largely avoided and the situation today would undoubtedly have been more conducive to a negotiated settlement.

It is therefore the very credibility of the Security Council that is in question today. That credibility will only be eroded further if the Council does not succeed in reversing that trend and demonstrating to the entire world its capacity to shoulder its responsibilities in the management and settlement of some of the disputes that have been on its agenda for quite some time. In that regard, the Council should have a comprehensive policy based on equity and justice. It should adopt a clear and coherent approach vis-à-vis the issues conferred upon it by the Charter, and in particular with regard to those that pertain to international peace and security.

I must point out that, in the course of its work during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, the Open-ended Working Group on the

Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council employed a new methodology to consider the issues entrusted to it by its mandate. The members of the Group gave themselves the authority to hold substantive debates, even during consultations. That is contrary to the usual working method, which entailed assigning questions to two separate groups, one which dealt with issues pertaining to Council expansion and related issues, and the other which took up matters having to do with working methods and transparency.

Thanks to the leadership of Mr. Julian Hunte, the Working Group has been innovative in identifying certain important questions, including those having to do with regional representation, the conditions to be met for membership in the Security Council, the responsibility of the Council and the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, including improving the quality of the annual report now before us as well as the Council's special reports to the Assembly. That change in methodology has undoubtedly reanimated somewhat the discussions in the Working Group. But the overall prospects remain uncertain because of the ongoing impasse on substantive questions relating to Security Council reform.

The general debate during the current session has once again revealed that many delegations have reaffirmed their commitment to Council reform as a vital element in the overall reform of the United Nations. They have called for the expansion of the Council in order to enhance its representative character, thereby strengthening its legitimacy and authority. The debate has also highlighted the call of some delegations for a permanent seat in an enlarged Security Council. That rise in interest in the reform of the Council and the activism of some in that respect can be explained in part by the fact that the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change is to submit its report to the Secretary-General at the beginning of December and the fact that the Secretary-General's recommendations in that regard could include references to the reform of the Security Council.

Some believe that the issue of United Nations reform in general, and of the Security Council in particular, will evolve positively in the wake of the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. That is the hope of us all. We would also hope that such a development will remedy the current injustice by taking into account the interests of developing countries, especially those in Africa. My delegation is prepared to consider any proposal that will contribute to progress in our deliberations, so long as those proposals promote, through rotation, the broadest possible participation in the work of the Security Council. Nevertheless, we consider it essential that any plan to reform the Council not be divisive. On the contrary, such a programme should rally the broadest possible support from the General Assembly and should be part of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations, whose main bodies — and the relations between them — must be transformed in significant ways.

Lastly, regions must be permitted to decide how they wish to be represented in the Security Council. In that context, we would like to reaffirm our commitment to the concrete proposals regarding substantive issues made by members of the Non-Aligned Movement, in particular those pertaining to the expansion in the membership of the Council. All those proposals reflect a desire to strengthen the representative character and effectiveness of that important body. I also want to emphasize that any expansion in the composition of the Security Council must take into account Africa's claims — as set out at the Organization of African Unity summit held in Harare in 1997 and often expressed by my own and many other African delegations — to allocate to Africa at least two permanent, rotating seats and two additional non-permanent seats.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus takes note of the increased activities of the Security Council during the past year in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. We favour maintaining the momentum in improving the working methods of the Security Council. We also favour more openness in the Council's work and more intensive interaction between it and the General Assembly.

Belarus deems it necessary to continue the practice of holding open meetings of the Council at the ministerial level on the more serious problems facing the international community. In so doing, it is important that the Security Council act strictly within its area of competence and without impinging on the areas of responsibility of other principal bodies of the United Nations.

There has been a significant increase in the activities of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. We believe that Committee should become an effective tool in combating international terrorism, strengthening the counter-terrorist coalition under the auspices of the United Nations and monitoring compliance with the requirements of resolution 1373 (2001). Direct interaction between the Committee and regional organizations could certainly help carry out those tasks.

We are convinced of the need to strengthen the key role of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. Actions that circumvent the authority of the Council jeopardize the very foundation of international law and order. The role of the Council determines the importance of the activities of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

Belarus supports the continued active use by the President of the current session of the General Assembly of the practice of consulting with regional groups of States to reform the membership and activities of the Security Council. Belarus shares the view that the reform of the Security Council cannot be reduced solely to changing the membership of the Council. We need to review the overall approach to assessing threats, as well as the way by which decisions are taken on effective ways to respond to them.

Belarus looks forward to the important contribution to be made by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in drafting recommendations on this matter. We would also like to draw the Assembly's attention to the primary individual responsibility of all Member States to choose the best option for reforming the membership and the work of the Security Council. We also wish to stress the special role played in that process by the General Assembly.

A generally acceptable formula for the expansion of the Security Council should be based on the elimination of the imbalance between the membership of the Council and that of the Organization, the principle of equitable geographical distribution in the allocation of seats and the prevention of new divisions on this issue among Member States.

We agree with the view of the Non-Aligned Movement that the membership of the Council should be expanded by 11 seats on a consensus basis. Increasing the number of non-permanent members should take into account the interests of all regional groups. We think it just and necessary that an additional seat be allocated to the Group of the Eastern European States.

With regard to the category of permanent members, additional seats should be allocated to the countries of the three developing regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as to two developed States, from Europe and from Asia, that have made the most tangible contribution to the maintenance of international security.

Successful reform of the Council will give great impetus to the work of the Organization and enhance its international authority. Failure to reform the Security Council would engender doubt as to the Organization's ability to transform itself in face of contemporary challenges. We must not allow that to happen. Belarus believes that only constructive interaction — taking into account the views of countries large and small, rich and poor — will make it possible to create a more authoritative, representative and effective Security Council. Our delegation is prepared to engage in that kind of cooperation.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): My delegation appreciates the fact that we are jointly debating two important reports, namely, the report of the Security Council on its work over the past year (A/59/2) and the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (A/58/47).

Also, this debate comes at a time when the threats associated with the current international security environment have exacerbated the difficulties confronting the Security Council. Those threats include international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, the consequences of the war in Iraq and crises such as those in the Middle East and Darfur. The debate also comes at a time when there is an increased sense of urgency about the need to reform and expand the Security Council to reflect the new international environment, so as to allow it to better deal with those threats.

There is no doubt that the Security Council has become the most active organ of the United Nations. The weakening of both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly has placed special emphasis on the work of the Security Council. Quite often, people outside these walls have mistaken the Security Council for the sum total of the United Nations. That is unfortunate and must be corrected for the sake of the entire United Nations.

In the past year we have also noticed that the Security Council has adopted some measures aimed at improving its working methods. Those improvements would be significant if they were permanent. But as long as the rules of procedure of the Council remain provisional, changes in the working methods of the Council, no matter how positive, will always seem inadequate.

Nonetheless, we are pleased that, over the past year, the Council has demonstrated an increased willingness to cooperate with other organs of the United Nations, such as the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council. The closer cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council in assisting African countries that have emerged from conflict is much welcomed. Specifically, we wish to highlight the cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi as a good example of that closer working relationship between principal organs. In that context, we wish to pay tribute to Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom, who made possible a joint visit to Guinea-Bissau earlier this year. The impact of having representatives both of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council reporting jointly on a country in dire need cannot be underestimated.

While the Council has been able to address some of the threats that confront us, we remain concerned at its inability to demonstrate the requisite political will and a commitment to effective decision-making, which have prevented it from being able to address other pressing challenges.

We also remain concerned that the Council is still unable to take a definitive decision on the conflict in the Middle East. The Council will soon have to transcend the division among its own members and speak with one voice on that tragic situation, or face the erosion of its credibility as an organ mandated to maintain international peace and security.

In recent months we have seen the Security Council debate a number of resolutions that would appear to reinterpret treaty obligations or to impose legislative demands on Member States. We believe that that demonstrates an unwelcome tendency by the Security Council to encroach on the work of the General Assembly. The General Assembly is the only democratic and fully representative international organ of the United Nations that has the unique ability to forge genuine international consensus on sensitive issues such as terrorism. Working through the General Assembly is the way to ensure that multilateralism protects weak States from being overwhelmed by powerful ones.

On matters of international peace and security, the Security Council is increasingly relying on regional organizations to take the lead in resolving conflicts. Regional organizations are increasingly becoming essential building blocks in the global security system. For the effective functioning of the United Nations system, it is important for the Organization and its agencies to be able to delegate responsibilities and to provide, where required, the necessary resources to regional organizations that are better placed to deal with peace and security challenges in their respective regions.

In that regard, Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations envisages situations in which the Security Council may utilize regional organizations by virtue of their proximity to, and knowledge of, a particular conflict. Regional organizations are well placed to intervene sooner than the Security Council process would allow. For instance, the African Union has been first in assisting the people of Burundi and Darfur. The African Union has already taken it upon itself to become involved in resolving conflict situations in spite of the lack of resources and logistical and material support. My delegation believes that the Security Council may soon have to define in clear terms how it can utilize regional organizations that are ready to assist in making the world a safer place. As it is, it has become quite noticeable, for example, that the international community has asked the African Union to expand its involvement in Darfur. Yet that request has not been accompanied by an announcement of resources that the international community is willing to

make available to the African Union to take on that responsibility.

There has been dramatic progress in the matter of the reform and expansion of the Security Council. In its resolution 48/26, of 1993, the General Assembly established the Open-ended Working Group to consider all aspects of the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council. The Working Group was established because Member States recognized the need to address the eroding credibility and lack of representational equity in the Security Council. The Working Group was to examine formulas to increase the membership of the Security Council and make it relevant to the needs of the twenty-first century.

While we appreciate the efforts of Mr. Julian Hunte, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, to revitalize the work of the Open-ended Working Group, it is disappointing that the Working Group has remained deadlocked since it was established, particularly on the vital issue of enlarging the Security Council.

In September 2000, the Millennium Summit reiterated the need for Security Council reform and called on Member States to intensify their efforts to achieve comprehensive reform of the United Nations.

In September 2003, the Secretary-General announced the formation of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. South Africa was among those that welcomed the Panel, because we anticipated that it would give more momentum to the debate on the reform of the United Nations.

In September 2004, during the general debate at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, an overwhelming number of delegations pronounced themselves to be in support of reform of the Security Council. Nearly half of the membership of the Organization specifically called for an expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. South Africa supports the expansion of the Security Council's membership in both categories. As the Assembly is aware, President Thabo Mbeki has announced from South Africa that my country is ready to serve as a permanent member of a restructured and expanded Security Council. Recently, our Cabinet reaffirmed South Africa's availability to serve on a restructured Security Council and emphasized that the offer would be pursued in cooperation, rather than in competition, with other countries of the continent.

Increased political will at the highest levels of Government to address the reform and enlargement of the Security Council has increased the sense of urgency, and it is understood that the time is now ripe to take action on the expansion and reform of the Security Council.

The report of the High-level Panel will be out on 1 December 2004. We hope that delegations will give the Panel's report full consideration, and not just focus on the section regarding Security Council reform. We also hope that they will address development issues as well. We believe that other development issues, such as peace-building and providing support for States under stress, require urgent attention from the international community. That is the least the people of the world expect from us.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): My delegation extends its appreciation and thanks to the President of the Security Council for the month of October for introducing the report (A/59/2) of the Security Council to the General Assembly. The report covers a wide range of activities, and I wish to highlight some of them.

We are pleased to see general improvement in the subregion of West Africa, and we hope it will translate into lasting peace for the countries directly affected, and for the African continent as a whole.

As a country contributing troops to the United Nations Mission in Liberia, we are pleased to see that significant progress on the disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants is being attributed to the deployment of the United Nations Mission. It is our sincere hope that peace will return to Liberia and that the country will embark on sustainable development.

With regard to Sierra Leone, we agree with the decision of the Security Council to readjust the timetable for the drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone until the country is in a position to assume primary responsibility for internal security.

On the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we remain seriously perturbed by the continued violence in the eastern part of the country. Our persistent demand to strengthen the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

(MONUC) with a robust mandate is dictated by reality on the ground, which in turn emanates from the vastness of the country and the continued violence in the east. While welcome, resolution 1565 (2004), which was adopted recently by the Security Council to increase the strength of MONUC, is not even near to being proportionate to the task at hand.

Peace in the region is of paramount importance for us in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It is for that reason that SADC Ministers, at a meeting in Lusaka of SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, reaffirmed SADC's collective undertaking to safeguard the security and political stability of the region within the framework of the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation and the Mutual Defence Pact.

The Transitional Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be given all support and assistance to anchor the peace. Interference in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must cease, and the Congolese people must fully benefit from their natural resources without plunder.

A massive humanitarian crisis is unfolding in the Darfur region of the Sudan. Against that background, my delegation reiterates its support for Security Council resolution 1564 (2004), which was adopted on 18 September of this year. While we fully support the efforts of the African Union in that regard, we feel strongly that the Security Council should assume full responsibility, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The objective of the ceasefire in Western Sahara was not to delay the realization of the right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. It was to create an environment conducive to the implementation of the United Nations Settlement Plan, which was adopted by both the African Union and the United Nations and was agreed to by both parties. In our view, the Security Council has not exerted sufficient pressure to ensure that its resolutions on Western Sahara are honoured. We call upon both parties, and especially the Government of Morocco, to cooperate with the United Nations to ensure the implementation of the Settlement Plan. While we regret the resignation of Mr. James Baker, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, we hope that everything will be done to implement the Settlement Plan. With regard to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, we do not agree with the proposal to reduce its size. The priority here should be the implementation of the United Nations Settlement Plan.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories is a challenge to the international community. We support a comprehensive and just settlement in Middle East and call for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

On the subject of peacekeeping, my delegation can only reiterate the need to fully support peacekeeping missions through the provision of financial, material and political support, as urged in the report of the Security Council.

Any measures to sustain the unity of the international community against international terrorism must be in accordance with the fundamental principles of international law and the law of treaties. We strongly suggest that, if Member States are to cooperate fully in combating terrorism and effectively implement the measures that have been adopted, they should be involved in the formulation of measures to combat it. The Security Council must not assume a legislative function in the war on terror — a function never allocated to it by the Charter of the United Nations — by prescribing obligations that many States will be unable to implement effectively, as they are inconsistent with the law of treaties. Such an exercise would undoubtedly undermine the very noble efforts of the international community to eliminate international terrorism.

On thematic issues, I wish to emphasize that, while taking into account the mandates of the various bodies of the United Nations, we believe that thematic issues add value to the deliberations of the Security Council. Having initiated the debate in the Security Council on the issue of women, peace and security, we are convinced that that debate and subsequent decisions have shifted the Council's focus from viewing women as mere victims of conflict to seeing women as indispensable contributors to peace-making and peacekeeping. In fact, women have today initiated some successful peace processes in Africa. That must be acknowledged, recognized and enhanced. Resolution 1325 (2000) is not about gender equality in

general; it is about the role of women in making peace and keeping the peace.

Member States have referred to the issue of Council reform every year during the general debate of the General Assembly since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. However, there is special significance to this issue this year as a result of the recommendations expected to be made by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which was appointed by the Secretary-General.

Furthermore, from an African perspective, the establishment of the African Union's Peace and Security Council has given a new dimension to the relationship between the Security Council and that Council.

In addition, we anticipate that the forthcoming review of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals will have a positive impact on the reform of the United Nations as whole.

It is from that perspective that my delegation is participating in this debate.

During the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group presented us with a summary of the discussions in the Working Group. That summary gave us a valid and rich account of the views put forward by Member States, which need to be further strengthened by the General Assembly prior to being finalized.

With regard to criteria for membership of the Security Council, it must be stressed that size should not be substituted for capacity, and that capacity must not be narrowly defined in terms of material wealth. In addition, given the new era in which we live, it is important that the views of regional groups are taken fully into account.

With regard to increasing the membership of the Council, I wish to reiterate the decision of the African heads of State and Government set out in the Harare Declaration, namely, that Africa deserves at least two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats on the Council. The permanent seats would rotate among African Members States, and Africa would decide on its own the modality for rotation.

There is no doubt that the reform of the Security Council is a complex issue. Resolution 53/30 clearly lays out the circumstances under which a decision should be taken on that issue, which first appeared as an item on the agenda of the General Assembly in 1979.

The Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group has clearly undertaken initiatives to stimulate a focused discussion on the aspects of, and issues related to, the reform of the Security Council. We commend his efforts. We are convinced that the work of the Working Group dealing with this issue has produced some results, and that useful suggestions have been made by Member States. While the task of the Chairman is to facilitate deliberation, it is the responsibility of Member States to reach agreement.

All there is to be said about Security Council reform has been said. However, every action to be taken to achieve the reform of the Security Council has not been taken. The time has come for us to put an end to these perennial discussions. In that respect, my delegation supports the view of the Chairman contained in document A/58/57, namely, that the Working Group should set a deadline for the conclusion of its work. In our view, the special event envisaged for next year will provide an ideal opportunity for world leaders to make good on the decision they took at the Millennium Summit to intensify their efforts to achieve comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all aspects. To that end, we call on Member States to show political will in order to reach agreement on this important issue.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I have the pleasure, on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, to thank the former Chairman and Vice-Chairpersons of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council for their remarkable efforts in leading the work of the Group during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish them every success in carrying out that important task and in achieving general consensus among the Member States on strengthening the role and effectiveness of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The annual inclusion of the item on the reform of the Security Council on the agenda of the General Assembly reflects the paramount importance that the international community attaches to the issue of restructuring the Security Council and increasing its effectiveness as an integral part of the process of revitalizing and promoting the role of the United Nations system in order to strengthen the ability of the Organization to confront the challenges and developments of the twenty-first century.

Despite the in-depth consultations carried out by the Working Group since it was established in 1993 and the initiatives and proposals of regional groups, there are still great differences with regard to the views and positions of Member States on this issue, especially in connection with the issue of increasing the membership of the Council and other related matters, such as regional representation on the Council, the criteria for the selection of permanent members and the prerogatives and powers of new members. Differences also exist with regard to the decision-making process, accountability and the necessary measures and procedures that should be used in regulating the use of the veto.

The United Arab Emirates would like to reaffirm its support for the position of the Non-Aligned Movement on this matter. We note with satisfaction the progress made in the past few years to improve the Council's working methods. That progress has been reflected in the increase in the number of open plenary meetings, which have given non-members of the Council an opportunity to participate in the Council's debates, as well as in the increase in the number of public briefings held on matters of common concern to the international community.

However, the United Arab Emirates is deeply concerned about the policy of double standards followed by the Security Council when it takes up issues of concern to Arabs pertaining to the Middle East, such as the Palestinian question. That practice has impaired the Council's ability to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to it. We urge the Council and its members to refrain from following such a policy, and to act in accordance with the principals of the Charter, relevant resolutions of international legitimacy and provisions of international humanitarian law.

We would also like to emphasize that the imbalance in the composition of the Council and the unequal distribution of powers and prerogatives among its members have greatly hindered the ability of the Council to address some of the most important items on its agenda, specifically those pertaining to the maintenance of international peace and security. That has led to prolonging those issues, with the concomitant humanitarian disasters they entail. Our deliberations on this item should therefore cover all aspects of Security Council reform as an indivisible part of a comprehensive effort aimed at making the role of the Council more effective and responsible at improving democracy in its working methods so as to reflect the current political changes in international relations.

In that connection, we would like to reiterate our support for the following proposals.

First, we support an enlargement in the Council's permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. That enlargement should be proportionate and balanced and should have the approval of at least two thirds of the members of the General Assembly. It should also be based on the principles of the sovereign equality of Member States and equitable geographical representation, and should reflect the global character of the United Nations.

Secondly, we believe that any future restructuring of the Security Council must address the problem of the underrepresentation of developing countries so that the imbalance in geographical representation can be corrected and so that political balance in the Council can be enhanced.

Thirdly, we believe that a permanent seat should be allocated to the Group of Arab States. That seat would be filled by Arab countries on a rotating basis, and in accordance with the practices endorsed by the League of Arab States in the framework of discussions with both the Group of African States and the Group of Asian States.

Fourthly, in the event that agreement is reached on increasing the number of permanent members of the Security Council, we believe that those seats should go to countries that have truly demonstrated, in their relationship with the United Nations, the ability to discharge primary responsibility in such areas as the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as their capacity to fulfil the purposes and principles of the Charter in the economic, social and political arenas.

Fifthly, we think that priority should be given to establishing checks and balances on the use of the veto, in order to ensure impartiality and objectivity in the Security Council's decision-making process and in the exercise of its prerogatives and powers in addressing pressing global issues that require urgent intervention to stem bloodshed and to protect civilians and their property in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

Sixthly, comprehensive, serious and objective periodic assessment of the Council's work must be carried out in order to institutionalize the Council's procedures and working methods and to ensure its ability to recognize the nature of the challenges it faces. In that connection, we emphasize the importance of strengthening coordination and cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as with regional organizations, in order to improve and strengthen the Council's capacity to address existing disputes and conflicts and to contain their serious implications for humankind.

In conclusion, we hope that our deliberations on this item will lead to a common and practical international vision to carry out substantial and positive reform in the Security Council, including in its composition and membership, as well as to improve its working methods in order to enable it to deal with the increasing challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Gordon (Philippines): My delegation believes that there is merit in today's joint debate on two interrelated agenda items, namely, on the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly and on the reform of the Security Council. The Philippines views this joint debate as an opportunity for the general membership of the United Nations to look more closely at how the Security Council has been responding meaningfully to the evolving international peace and security challenges posed by our ever-changing world. It also provides an opportunity for members of the Council to listen to the views of the general membership with regard to both the substantive and procedural conduct of its work. The Philippines and other members of the Security Council will benefit from the views of Member States on the two topics before us.

The report of the Security Council (A/59/2) is factual. The introduction presents, in chronological order, the actions taken with respect to each specific issue dealt with by the Council. The annexes catalogue all the actions pursued over the period under review in the performance of its primary role to preserve international peace and security.

The task of analysing the effectiveness of the Council in the performance of its role can, in my delegation's view, best be made by the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the United Nations.

In that regard, my delegation once again calls for more substantive consideration by the Assembly, not necessarily of the entire Council report, but at least of certain key issues addressed in it, in accordance with Article 12 of the Charter of the United Nations. In consultation with Member States, the President of the General Assembly may determine which issues should be more intensively discussed. The issues could be region- or country-specific, or could be any of the general themes the Council has considered. My delegation recommends that such discussions be carried out in an informal and open-ended format, either as informal consultations or as round-table exercises. The objective of an informal setting is to achieve a more thorough analysis of the work of the Council, an assessment many delegations have been clamouring for. That call must be heeded, given the status of the Security Council as the most powerful body entrusted with the responsibility to preserve international peace and security.

Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Philippines, stated in her address to the Assembly last year (see A/58/PV.13) that the actions of the Security Council in the pursuit of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and stability should be guided by the following principles: first, the principle of collective security, established under the Charter of the United Nations, should be observed; secondly, the Security Council should maintain and pursue a multilateral approach towards the performance of its primary role; and thirdly, observing the rule of law is of paramount importance in the maintenance of international peace and security.

My President did not offer those points as absolute benchmarks. They can, however, serve as

guideposts in a substantive analysis of the Council's work. They represent critical areas for consideration in the Assembly's more intensive discussion of the Council's work, which necessarily, but beneficially, entails more time being devoted to considering the Council's report.

The conclusions stemming from these informal discussions and analysis could represent a valuable input not only for the Council's consideration but also with respect to the next item we are considering today — the reform of the Security Council.

There is no question that reform of the Security Council is both important and urgent. It is important in order to ensure a balanced representation in the Security Council, and it is urgent because of the emergence of new and non-traditional threats to international peace and security requiring robust and effective responses on our part. Such responses require that we be fast, which means reacting immediately to certain issues that confront the world; that we be friendly, intelligible and understandable to the world so that it will be more supportive of the efforts of the United Nations; that we be flexible, so that we can immediately adapt to the changing, swirling tides of international affairs; and, most importantly, we must be forward-looking at all times, so that we can anticipate, protect people from, and prevent any exploitation or harassment of, and violence against, peoples, as well as safeguard their rights.

The need to reform the Council was formally recognized over a decade ago, when the Assembly adopted resolution 48/26 creating the Open-ended Working Group to address in detail the many aspects of Security Council reform. The emergence of new threats and challenges to international peace and security and shifting geopolitical realities have exerted even greater pressure in that respect, making the need for reform even more urgent and imperative. Over 120 countries took the floor during the Assembly's general debate last month calling for the Council's reform.

During its 10 years of work, the Working Group succeeded in reaching general agreement on two issues — namely, the improvement of the Council's decision-making process, leading to the more open and transparent conduct of its work; and the expansion of its membership. However, there is no agreement as yet on the details of such an expansion in terms of size or category — that is, whether to increase the number of non-permanent or permanent seats, or both.

My delegation believes that the key criterion in resolving the thorny issues of size and category is that of balanced representation, among other vital criteria. This is a delicate and sensitive issue that has eluded any agreement, despite the variety of formulas put forward.

In that connection, my delegation would like once again to invite the attention of the Assembly to three important points raised by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines when he addressed the Assembly during its general debate last month.

First, the Philippines called for a holistic reform not only of the Security Council but also of all other relevant United Nations structures requiring a redefinition of their relationships and responsibilities in the security field. That call implies a radical reform also of the Economic and Social Council and the strengthening of the powers of the Secretary-General.

Poverty and pandemic diseases such as AIDS, or even the flu, for instance, are not merely economic and public health issues. They constitute threats to security, as they are breeding grounds for conflicts which fall beyond the purview of the Security Council's mandate. The Secretary-General is supposed to be the executive arm of the United Nations, entrusted with the execution of directives from its parliamentary organs. Regrettably, he lacks the requisite authority — especially over the affiliated United Nations agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions, run by their respective governing boards — to exercise that executive power.

These examples underscore the need for a comprehensive approach to reform in the response of the United Nations to security challenges, as advocated by the Philippines.

Secondly, reform of the United Nations should be backed by a consensus on the promotion of collective ownership, and Security Council reform should give consideration to the views of the permanent members.

We should not, therefore, be polarized by narrow national and group interests, but unified by upholding the common or universal interest, if consensus is to be achieved. We should engage the permanent members of the Security Council in constructive consultations on

the Council's reform in order to bring the process to fruition.

Thirdly, one of the important criteria in the selection of new permanent members in the Council is the candidates' contributions in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. In that regard, a country such as Japan deserves to be considered for permanent membership.

It is my delegation's view that, if these three points are considered, it would greatly facilitate the reform of the Security Council as an integral element of the broader reform process of the United Nations aimed at enabling it to more effectively respond to challenges to international peace and security.

However meritorious reform proposals are, including those that may be recommended by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, none may ever be agreed upon if there is no political will to reach an acceptable compromise beneficial to the common good, especially on the sensitive issues involved in Security Council reform.

The task ahead is difficult, but, with the requisite political will, it will not be insurmountable.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): The report of the Security Council tells us that, over the past 12 months, the pace of activities was intense as the Council addressed a wide range of issues. We were not given a detailed analysis of the issues covered, but the report does give us an adequate descriptive account of the various matters that were dealt with and the actions taken. The Council deserves commendation for having undertaken such a considerable volume of work, through consultations, meetings and briefings, in a continuous round of activity. However, the overall record of achievement is mixed; there were positive outcomes, but, in other areas, there was little progress, and even some significant setbacks.

In Africa, there were three new peace missions authorized, and overall substantial progress was achieved in peace-building efforts and in reducing significant areas of conflict. Although an exit strategy must always be contemplated, it is important that the Council remain engaged to consolidate the gains made, continue the process of national reconciliation, and build the economic and social foundations for enduring stability.

In the Sudan, where the situation is still volatile, what is important is that the Council remain constructively engaged, working with the Government of the Sudan and with the African Union to promote peace, stability and order and for the facilitation of humanitarian relief.

With respect to the deterioration in the situation in Haiti in the early part of this year, the report tells us that the Council reacted promptly and effectively. The delegation of Jamaica disagrees with that assessment.

The fact is that the Council did not act promptly. The Council initially failed to respond to the request of the Haitian Government — which was supported by the Caribbean Community — and acted only in the wake of controversial political events which still have some troubling implications. Despite that, Jamaica remains in full support of the operations of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Beyond the immediate tasks of restoration of order and national reconciliation, we reaffirm the crucial importance of long-term social and economic development and of the fight against poverty in Haiti to sustain stability and peace.

In the Middle East, we see the pattern of recent years. The Council has been unable to act to curtail the escalation of violence. Political realities restrict its options and its ability to act with unity, authority and firmness. It is more and more evident that the Quartet and its road map are not leading to a solution. A bolder approach is needed which constrains the parties to respect the will of the international community for a comprehensive settlement. In Iraq, an effective role for the United Nations has proved difficult in the political evolution of events and in the face of a volatile security situation. We have confidence that the Secretary-General remains ready to do what is possible in order to assist in rebuilding a stable environment and in restoring Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

With respect to counter-terrorism, we note the efforts at revitalization of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in monitoring the implementation of Council resolution 1373 (2001). We believe it is also important that the Committee avoid being overly bureaucratic and inflexible in its operations and that it work with States to assist in providing practical assistance where difficulties in implementation arise.

In adopting its resolution 1540 (2004), the Council took a step which caused deep concern to many delegations. We appreciate the fact that there were some consultations with the broader membership and that there was no difficulty with the objective, namely, preventing the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists and non-State entities. However, resolution 1540 (2004) was an unusual use of the Council's powers under Chapter VII and has some troubling implications. We will now say only that the normal method for imposing such binding obligations should be by a treaty process.

We continue to feel the need to urge the Council to apply equal standards to the conduct of all States. There should be no double standards or selectivity where there are violations of the Charter and of international law. The Council should act judiciously in upholding legality and should act objectively in settling disputes on the basis of justice and fairness. It should be not only developing countries that must always face the prospect of sanctions and enforcement action. If that continues to be the pattern of Council action, there will be continued erosion in its credibility and legitimacy.

We continue to express our opposition to the holding of thematic debates in the Security Council. We take the view that those activities go beyond the mandate of the Council, which is empowered to consider threats to international peace and security. And they encroach on the authority of the General Assembly, which is the organ entrusted to discuss and determine norms and policies in broad areas of international cooperation. Regrettably, we note that the Council increased its activities in the holding of thematic debates over the past year. We feel that that endangers the proper balance in the exercise of the responsibilities of the various organs of the United Nations system.

We also continue to have concerns about the procedures of the Council in relation to transparency and accountability. It is increasingly rare for the Council to hold debates on actual situations affecting international peace and security. Holding such debates allows the Council to hear the views and recommendations of Member States as well as the positions of the parties. Regrettably, even when such debates are held, Council members give their views before hearing those of the wider community. That is a practice which should change. It is important to emphasize that, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council is accountable to the international community, on whose behalf it is exercising the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Accordingly, we would request that the views expressed in this debate should be drawn to the attention of the Security Council, in accordance with the recent decisions on the revitalization of the General Assembly.

I now turn to the subject of reform of the Security Council. We have noted the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council (A/58/47). It is not surprising that, once again, no consensus was possible and that the various issues were only debated again with fervour. What is clear now is that some decision has to be taken. Debate and discussion cannot go on forever. In the light of our expectation of proposals from the Secretary-General based on the recommendations of his High-level Panel, to be introduced in December, a final determination need not be made at the current session. But it cannot be delayed beyond the sixtieth session. It is time for action. Decisions have to be taken which are vital for the legitimacy and the authority of the Council. The questions of representation and the abolition of the veto are foremost and should be decided by the General Assembly, proceeding on the basis of rules for decision-making set out in the Charter.

At this stage, Jamaica will not make detailed comments on the issues and will await the proposals of the Secretary-General, which, along with the results of the Working Group's deliberations, will form the basis on which we will make our own pronouncement. In the meantime, we support the recommendation in paragraph 30 of the Working Group's report that the Group continue its work during the fifty-ninth session.

Mr. Aboul Atta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like first to speak of the report of the Security Council (A/59/2) to the General Assembly on the Council's work during the period 1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004. We would like to thank the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom for introducing the report.

The report of the Security Council indicates that the majority of items on its agenda concern the African continent. We welcome the approach, adopted by the Council during the period under review, of holding open debates on issues related to the African continent. We hope that the vision proposed by the general membership of the Organization during these meetings will establish a clear foundation for a better understanding of the challenges faced on that continent. We would also like to note the continued development of cooperation between the Council, on the one hand, and the African Union and African regional organizations, on the other, in the area of peacekeeping and conflict resolution on the continent. We call for increasing and strengthening such activities and for the further development of their mechanisms.

Despite the Council's repeated failure to shoulder its responsibilities in the face of the deteriorating situation in the Middle East and its failure to adopt three draft resolutions during the period under review, one important positive development emerged during that period: the adoption of Council resolution 1515 (2003), which endorsed the road map.

We would like once again to affirm that the concept of peace and security is comprehensive and includes economic, social, humanitarian and geographic aspects that cannot be separated or dealt with in isolation. Accordingly, the Security Council must undertake its main responsibilities in peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building in cooperation and coordination with the relevant regional organizations and with the programmes and organs of the United Nations, at the forefront of which are the General Assembly, including its Main Committees, and the Economic and Social Council. This is the case because those two organs constitute the appropriate legislative machinery to formulate the principles that should govern the overall peace-building process.

I would like to turn now to Egypt's thinking on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. First, Mr. President, I would like to thank your predecessor and express my appreciation for his initiative to stimulate a substantive discussion of this issue. This was helped by the papers and statistics that he prepared, which enriched last session's deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. His efforts also led to the Working Group's adoption of its report to the General Assembly (A/58/47), which in our view is a new launching pad for continuing our deliberations on this important issue. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representatives of Ecuador and Liechtenstein, the coordinators on this issue during the fifty-eighth session.

My delegation does not want to reiterate the principles underlying the Egyptian position, which we have done for the past 11 years whenever the issue was addressed. Nor do we wish to go into the details of our position on the expansion of the Security Council — which we set out in our statement during the general debate on 24 September, at the 10th plenary meeting, in which we declared our readiness to assume permanent responsibilities in the framework of our full compliance with the position endorsed by African leaders in 1997 in Harare pertaining to the number of permanent and non-permanent seats that should be allocated to Africa and how they should be filled. My delegation also reaffirms its support for the position of the Non-Aligned Movement on the number of proposed Security Council members, as well as its position on the categories of membership. All those positions are governed by our fundamental approach to this topic, which is that reform must be the subject of greater consensus, must not lead to the exclusion of particular civilizations or cultures from the international political decision-making process, and must reflect the current political realities without marginalizing certain parties that we believe have great importance in collective international action in the political, security and economic spheres.

We are also convinced that Security Council reform cannot be carried out without an objective examination by the General Assembly of its working methods, and of the concepts of accountability and transparency, which must be the solid principles of the mechanisms of collective international action in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Our discussion of the item before the Assembly today has a new dynamic, one that we sensed in the last session and that we are increasingly noticing during the present one. Indeed, that dynamic is reflected in our current discussion of the topic. Many countries have expressed the need to consider in depth the issue of Security Council reform and all related matters. Perhaps one reason for the great focus on the

issue by the international community is that we are awaiting the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. In addition, our proceedings during this session have greater importance because we are preparing for the high-level meeting to be held during the sixtieth session to review the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, which included United Nations reform. We must engage in an in-depth and serious discussion of the six topics that were proposed by the General Assembly President at the previous session, and which were the basis of the deliberations of the Working Group.

We must not lose sight of what we should achieve and must not confuse that with the narrow vision of what we want to achieve. We need to achieve an equitable and balanced representation on the Council that will equally meet the rights of developing and developed countries. Reform must not create a less capable Council. Reform and expansion must be achieved in parallel. We must not have either reform or expansion alone. We need to show genuine desire and serious political will to strike a comprehensive balance between reform and expansion. That balance must combine the equitable distribution of new seats, equitable geographical representation that takes into consideration the changes that have taken place in some areas since the end of the cold war, and representation of all cultures and civilizations. Expansion must also lead to the revitalization of the Council's work and must secure its objectivity, its impartiality and its respect for the principles of transparency and accountability.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the delegation of Egypt affirms its support for your efforts and its total readiness to cooperate with you and with all Member States to ensure the successful conclusion of the Working Group's efforts.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The Charter of the United Nations confers upon the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. When the Security Council acts it does so on behalf of the international community. When it is powerless to act or when it fails to do so, the credibility of the United Nations and of the entire international community is at stake. It is therefore in everybody's interest that the Security Council be effective and respected, that it demonstrate wisdom and fairness by not acting in haste or showing favouritism. It is also in the interest of all that its composition be fully representative of the community on whose behalf it acts and which gives it the necessary legitimacy to do so.

It is therefore time to move forward with Security Council reform. Switzerland supports an increase in the membership of the Council to strengthen the legitimacy of its decisions and their implementation by Member States. The composition of the Security Council should better reflect changes that have occurred since the Organization was founded. A greater role should be allocated to the developing countries, where the greatest number of people live, and better account should be taken of the particular financial and material support that certain countries provide to the United Nations system.

My country is in favour of expanding the Security Council, but it is against creating new seats that have veto power. We are against it because the current exercise of the veto is not democratic, but also because it would affect the Council's ability to act.

To make the expansion possible, we need to find a balanced formula acceptable to the greatest possible number of Member States. We note that the Working Group on expansion of the Security Council has not been able, after 10 years of commendable effort, to find a formula that it could submit to the General Assembly. Switzerland believes that the debate must now be taken to another level, and we eagerly await the proposals of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, appointed by the Secretary-General to take up the question of strengthening collective security.

The expansion of the Security Council is the most visible and the most frequently discussed aspects of Council reform, but it is not the only aspect that needs to be taken into account. Switzerland attaches great importance to reforms — perhaps less dramatic, but equally essential — in the functioning of the Security Council.

Important improvements could be undertaken without any formal revision of the Charter. First, with regard to the exercise of the veto, my country has called for greater restraint here. Any abuse of the veto affects the credibility of the United Nations and increases the already widespread feeling in certain regions of the world that double standards are sometimes being used. Furthermore, to the extent that the veto is a kind of privilege, could one not expect

people who use the veto to explain that use in the General Assembly after the event? Would it not be a means for a State concerned to have its position better understood by the international community?

Secondly, Switzerland hopes that the work of the Security Council will continue to evolve towards greater transparency and greater participation by non-Members of the Council. There is a need to strengthen the mechanisms for consultations with the States directly concerned by tension in their areas, as well as with those that contribute to peace operations.

Switzerland also believes that greater progress should be made towards making working documents available. The Security Council deals with matters that affect all Member States and that require decisive action by all States. It is, therefore, important that all States have access to the documents and draft resolutions as soon as they are being considered in the Council. This should occur without any delay and in a heightened spirit of transparency. Current practices here are inadequate.

Thirdly, Switzerland believes that the General Assembly should once again play a central role in the functioning of the Organization. The ongoing reform of its working methods will, I hope, help to revitalize this organ.

For its part, the Security Council must retain the area of competence entrusted to it by the Charter. Yet, in three recent resolutions, the Security Council has acted as a legislator, imposing new obligations in a discretionary manner on Member States, and this has been done outside of the normal context of sanctions. It was done in response to an urgent need to combat terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This kind of action should, however, remain the exception. The elaboration of new rules of international law with universal scope should occur, not within a restricted circle, but with the participation of all, within the United Nations General Assembly, or through other normal diplomatic mechanisms.

The question of strengthening collective action is central to the current session of the General Assembly. The time is right to make progress on the reforms that have been discussed for so long. Switzerland calls upon all those interested to be open-minded and to be willing to find a formula that is acceptable to the greatest number of States.

Mr. Zaki (Pakistan): This item has been under consideration in the General Assembly for over a decade. The delay is a reflection of the importance and complexity of the issues involved.

There is general consensus that the Security Council's composition and its working methods are not democratic. Decisions are taken by a few. The five permanent members, some more than others, exercise inordinate influence over the Council's decisions. Simultaneously, there is visible concern at the increasing concentration of decision-making power in the Security Council in relation to the other organs of the United Nations.

The endeavour to improve the Security Council should be guided by a vision of creating a new multilateralism that is democratic and cooperative, rather than oligarchic and coercive. It must address the principal concerns of the United Nations membership about the competence and sphere of responsibility of the Security Council; its composition and representativeness; its decision-making and working methods; and its effectiveness and accountability.

First, I will address the issue of the Security Council's competence. The Security Council has been assigned the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security under the Charter, specifically under Chapters VI and VII. But the Charter clearly stipulates that the Security Council acts on behalf of the General Assembly. Consequently, the Council is accountable for its decisions and actions to the general membership, which is represented in this General Assembly. Moreover, the Security Council cannot exclude the Assembly from reviewing its work and decisions; nor can it arbitrarily acquire exclusive competence over issues that do not directly involve the maintenance of peace and security — such as terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation. A major goal of any United Nations reform process must be to ensure the balance of responsibilities, envisaged under the Charter, between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Secondly, there is the Council's decision-making. Both the Charter and the Council's provisional rules of procedure provide for discussion and decisions in open meetings and in a transparent manner. It is only thus that States can be held accountable for their positions and policies on the issues under consideration. Unfortunately, over the past three decades, most of the

Security Council's deliberations and decisions take place in closed "informal consultations". Even the parties directly involved in various conflicts and disputes are almost completely excluded from participation in the deliberative and decision-making process. The Council's decisions are mostly *ex parte* — derogating an essential principle of due process. In the Council, initiatives emanate mostly from one or more of the five permanent members, or other small groupings of major Powers, usually designated as "Friends" of the issue. The right of veto is usually exercised informally and invisibly — and, more infrequently, openly — to ensure that the Security Council's decisions not infringe the interests of the permanent members. Given the binding nature of the Council's decisions, the power of the veto — explicit or implicit — has been used extensively to shape the international policies and behaviour of other States on an increasing number of issues.

The reform of the Security Council must prescribe ways and means to introduce greater democracy and due process into its deliberations and decision-making. Open meetings should be the rule and not the exception. The exercise of the veto must be fully justified, including allowing a possible review by the General Assembly and even by the International Court of Justice. Similarly, the Council's decisions to take enforcement action under Chapter VII should be subjected to a periodic review by the United Nations General Assembly to ensure against injustice and injury to less powerful nations.

On the composition of the Council, it is quite evident that the Security Council's current composition is not representative of the general membership. While the five permanent members can be considered a separate and exceptional category, the proportional representation of the rest of United Nations membership has become progressively worse over the last few decades. In 1945, leaving aside the five permanent members, 46 United Nations Member States were represented by 6 elected States on the Council — a proportion of 7.5 to 1. By 1951, when the Council's expansion was proposed, 71 Member States were represented by 6 elected States — a proportion of 11.5 to 1. By 1966, when the Council was enlarged to 15 members, 122 Member States were represented by 10 elected States — a proportion of 12 to 1. Today, 186 States are represented by 10 States — a proportion of 18 to 1. It is clear, therefore, that the number of elected members of the Security Council must be enlarged. It should at least restore the proportion of 10 to 1. This would indicate the addition of at least 10 new elected members, and thus a Security Council composed of 25 Member States.

Secondly, the enlargement should reflect the regional composition of the general membership of the United Nations. Thus, the Council's enlargement should accord larger representation to Asia, Africa and Latin America, which are presently underrepresented in comparison to the other two regional groups.

Thirdly, the expansion should accord representation to those States that entered the United Nations after the last enlargement of the Council in 1966. These are mostly small- and medium-sized States. It is those small- and medium-sized States, and not the larger States seeking permanent membership for themselves on the Security Council, which comprise the vast majority of the general membership and constitute the "new international reality".

If the issue of enlargement had been guided by an objective approach, agreement would have been reached several years ago. Unfortunately, consensus has been frustrated by the ambitions of a few States that desire the privileged status of the permanent five. This status was the result of an historical agreement and is an unfortunate legacy with which the United Nations membership has had to live. Our efforts should seek to temper the inequity and imbalance resulting from this unfortunate legacy, not to compound it further by creating new centres of privilege within the United Nations. New permanent members will not neutralize the inordinate influence of existing permanent members. Two wrongs cannot make a right. A larger oligarchy is no antidote to an elite power club. The unequal power of the five can be tempered by the combined endeavours of the general membership only by adding a sufficient number of elected members who can influence the deliberations and decisions of the Security Council. If four or five new permanent members are added to a Council of 25, the rest of the United Nations membership — 181 States — will continue to be grossly underrepresented on the Council.

Such an addition of new permanent members would thus further erode the principle of sovereign equality and the concept of collective security enshrined in the United Nations Charter. It would

aggravate tensions within every regional group, since the claim of each of the aspirants for permanent status is opposed by other Member States from their own respective regions. It would exclude the equitable participation of other States that have equal or better credentials for permanent membership than some of the four or five self-nominated aspirants.

Already, the announcement of the collective ambition of the so-called G-4s has provoked open divisions within and among regions. Several other countries have declared their own candidacies. The foreign ministers of the Islamic countries have declared that any reform proposal that neglects the adequate representation of the Islamic Ummah, in any category of membership in an expanded Security Council, will not be acceptable to the Islamic countries.

Moreover, the addition of new permanent members would further complicate decision-making in the Security Council. Such decisions would have to accommodate the interests of nine or 10 permanent members rather than the present five. This would happen even if the new permanent members agreed to forego the right of veto.

It is in view of such considerations that the Non-Aligned Movement countries have taken the logical position that, if there is no agreement on other categories of membership, expansion should take place, for the time being, in the non-permanent category. Many countries outside the Non-Aligned Movement also share this view.

Enlargement in the category of non-permanent members would adhere to the principle of sovereign equality, ensure greater representation of the general membership and promote greater democracy and accountability in the work of the Security Council. Instead of a new "concert of power", we must promote the power of the principles of the United Nations Charter and the new paradigm of a cooperative and democratic multilateralism through an enlarged and reformed Security Council.

It is the hope of the Pakistan delegation that it is this approach that will inspire the report and recommendations of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We hope that that report will also help to promote general consensus on the issue of Security Council reform and enlargement. We are prepared, in this context, to consider new ideas and approaches to promote consensus.

However, any effort to rush through a proposal on the sensitive issue of Security Council enlargement by a vote in the General Assembly will be manifestly divisive. It will defeat the very purpose of the Panel's report, which, as we understand, is to promote collective and unified action within a unified world Organization in order to address the new and old threats to peace and security. It is the aspirations of the general membership, not the ambitions of the few, that must drive the reform process.

Pakistan believes that the reform of the Security Council should be part of the comprehensive United Nations reform, which includes the revitalization of the United Nations General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations bodies. The issue of Security Council expansion cannot be considered in a piecemeal fashion divorced from other issues, such as its competence, decision-making ability, working methods and accountability.

The general membership must have the time and the opportunity to consider the issues and the report and recommendations of the Secretary-General's Panel. Mr. President, this exercise must be conducted within the Assembly under your guidance. We should aim at adopting comprehensive decisions on the Panel's report, including on United Nations reform, by consensus at the high-level event, to be convened next year by the Secretary-General to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

Mr. Kim Sam-hoon (Republic of Korea): Over the past year, the Security Council has continued and expanded its vital work around the world. Rather than commenting on every aspect of that work, I would like to focus on several issues that are of particular importance to the Republic of Korea before moving on to the matter of Security Council reform.

The Republic of Korea commends the efforts of the Security Council to combat terrorism and calls on all Member States to provide all possible assistance and cooperation. We strongly support the continuing work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and agree that it should be revitalized. We are also encouraged by the increasing coordination between the CTC and other bodies, including international, regional and subregional organizations, as well as the Al Qaeda/Taliban sanctions Committee.

In addition, the Republic of Korea commends the Security Council on its unanimous adoption of resolution 1566 (2004) last Friday, which rightly recognizes, in its operative paragraph 3, that terrorist acts

> "are under no circumstances justifiable by considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other similar nature".

The emphasis on protecting and compensating civilian victims is also noteworthy. We look forward to stronger, more concerted international efforts to combat terrorism through the creation of a new working group under the Security Council. Only by working together at every level can the international community hope to rid itself of the scourge of terrorism.

A distinct but related matter is how to prevent weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorists. By adopting resolution 1540 (2004), the Security Council aptly addressed that grave concern. Indeed, we note with interest that the Council has taken on an increasing role in filling the gaps within the existing international legal regime by imposing binding and far-reaching obligations on all United Nations Member States to take domestic legal and administrative measures.

We recognize the concern expressed by some countries that Security Council actions with law-making implications on such issues as non-proliferation and counter-terrorism may short-circuit the treaty-making process involving all countries. However, given the urgency of these matters and the complexities of normal treaty-making procedures, we accept that the Security Council may need to take relevant action in cases where efficiency and speed are required. As a demonstration of our firm commitment to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the Republic of Korea is complying fully with resolution 1540 (2004), and we encourage all Member States to do likewise.

Over the last year, the Security Council focused much of its work on Iraq, where there have been both triumphs and tragedies. Despite the ongoing violence and terrorism, there have been significant successes, including the transfer of sovereignty to the Interim Government of Iraq and the adoption of resolution 1546 (2004), which we strongly support. We believe that now more than ever, the international community must come together to provide support and assistance to the sovereign nation of Iraq as it struggles to establish security, hold elections, create democratic institutions and rebuild its civil society and infrastructure.

We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the people of Afghanistan on their first-ever democratic presidential election. After decades of despair, Afghanistan has passed yet another milestone on its path of hope. The Republic of Korea reaffirms its support for the Government and the people of Afghanistan in their ongoing efforts towards stability, democracy and peace.

The Republic of Korea supports the dedicated work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to develop and recommend new strategies and reforms for the United Nations in order to enable it to deal more effectively with challenges to international peace and security. We believe that, of all the issues considered by the Panel, Security Council reform is of foremost concern. As the Security Council takes on an increasingly crucial and extensive role in maintaining peace and security around the world, the matter of reform has become all the more important.

The position of the Republic of Korea on Security Council reform has been stated many times in the Open-ended Working Group and in general debates. We strongly believe that the Security Council should be reformed in such a way as to make it more representative of international realities, more accountable to the general membership, and more effective and operationally efficient than it is today. The Republic of Korea shares the view that an increase in the non-permanent membership is the most realistic formula for meeting those criteria.

We share the concern that an expansion of the permanent membership would weaken the institutional vitality of the United Nations by alienating and marginalizing a significant number of countries that possess the willingness and the capability to contribute substantially to international peace and security. By contrast, an increase in elected members would make the Council more accountable while strengthening the sense of shared ownership of the United Nations and the Security Council by the general membership.

The Republic of Korea also attaches great importance to rectifying existing imbalances among

regional groups in terms of an individual country's average chances of being represented on the Security Council. Under the current system, the Asian Group is grossly underrepresented. Although it comprises 53 Member States that are eligible for non-permanent membership on the Security Council, it is allocated the same number of seats as the Group of Western European and Other States, which is half the size of the Asian Group, with 26 eligible Member States. As such, the average chance of an Asian State to serve on the Council is one-half that of a member of the Group of Western European and Other States, or two-thirds that of an African or Latin American country. We believe that, in reforming the Security Council, such inequity and unfairness should be rectified as a matter of the highest priority.

In conclusion, cooperation and unity among the whole United Nations membership will be necessary to surmount the daunting challenges ahead. Therefore, the reform of the Security Council must be carried out in a way that enhances unity among Member States.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Expressing support for the joint consideration of items on the agenda of the General Assembly is one of the many ways in which we participate in efforts to revitalize the Assembly. However, in the case of today's debate, such joint consideration is much more than a technical exercise and a time-saving measure. In fact, we are of the view that each of the items before us is inherently a part of the other; therefore, only a joint discussion can be meaningful.

The report of the Security Council (A/59/2) is the main tool defining the relationship between two of the principal organs of the United Nations. It is worth mentioning that the Council has increasingly opened up to the wider United Nations membership, in particular through the holding of open debates on issues that are believed to be of concern to the wider membership. We welcome that practice and regularly participate in those debates. At the same time, we have no illusions as to the impact that those debates normally have on decision-making in the Council. Also, there are no recognizable criteria that govern the convening of open debates. Just this past Friday, the Council adopted its resolution 1566 (2004), which, to our mind and to the minds of many others, would have warranted an open debate for reasons of both substance and procedure, but such a debate did not take place. Instead, the wider membership will have an opportunity to express its opinions only after the fact.

Our understanding of the relationship between the Council and the Assembly is clear: the Council acts — in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations — on behalf of the entire membership. By electing the non-permanent members of the Council, the General Assembly entrusts those States with handling issues related to international peace and security on its behalf and accepts the relevant decisions as legally binding. The same kind of accountability extends — implicitly and to a greater degree — to the non-elected members of the Council, which have a special, and certainly not a lesser, responsibility to bear. We are therefore of the view that the current interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly is not sufficient. We certainly hope that the measures agreed upon in the context of the revitalization exercise will constitute a step forward.

Against that general background of accountability, we also find that the report before us, comprehensive as it is, lacks the necessary analytical depth and fails to address many relevant questions. Ever since it adopted its resolution 1373 (2001), the Council has expanded its activities into the field of law-making, a domain that, under the Charter, is reserved to the General Assembly. Parts of the current practice — as we witnessed once again during the reporting period — thus raise fundamental questions that affect the institutional balance of the Organization. However, the report before us remains silent on that topic.

The momentum for Security Council reform is growing, as the general debate of the fifty-ninth session very clearly illustrated, and it appears that you in particular, Mr. President, and your Office will face a special and indeed historic challenge. A variety of factors are leading to the recognition that more than 10 years of discussion are sufficient and that we cannot continue to adopt a wait-and-see attitude with regard to expansion of the Security Council. We fully share the view that the Council needs to more be modern and more representative if it is to truly represent the international community as a whole; we already expressed our national position in that respect several years ago.

At the same time, we firmly believe that expansion is only one element — clearly a central

element — of Security Council reform. A truly representative Council must represent the membership not only geographically, but also in substance. That understanding of representation is as important a challenge as expansion is. In fact, it has been a part of the discussions on Security Council reform for more than 10 years now. Practice with regard to the application of the veto and the greater inclusion of affected States that are not members of the Council must be part of such reform.

One of the main factors in the ongoing build-up to Security Council reform is the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, to be submitted at the beginning of December. We all know that the Panel cannot reform the Security Council on our behalf. But we must also not forget that expansion is not the core of the Panel's mandate. It was a true crisis of the Council and of multilateralism that led the Secretary-General to establish the High-Level Panel. No one will argue that the size of the Council was at the root of that crisis. To our mind, one must therefore conclude that only comprehensive reform — including expansion, and going beyond it — can create a more credible and thus more effective Security Council.

Mr. Wali (Nigeria): On behalf of the Nigerian delegation to the United Nations at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, I wish to express my appreciation to the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Sir Emyr Jones Parry, for introducing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/59/2).

My delegation considers the annual reporting of the work of the Security Council to the General Assembly not merely as a matter of routine, in fulfilment of the relevant article of the Charter of the United Nations; it is also a means of acquainting Members of the United Nations with the workings of the Security Council and with the scope of its decisions and challenges in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security.

There is hardly any doubt that the report provides a comprehensive picture of the decisions of the Council. What is not clear is the assessment of the success or otherwise of those Council measures. As it is now, Member States can hardly properly evaluate the workings of the Council or its shortcomings on the basis of the report with a view to recommending remedial action. There is a need, therefore, for more details on the circumstances that influence the Council's adoption of resolutions and its decision-making.

One of those challenges concerns conflicts in Africa, which dominated the work of the Council during the reporting period. Nigeria appreciates the role of the Council in the search for solutions to the crises in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan, and we welcome past and ongoing initiatives with regard to Somalia, Western Sahara, the Central African Republic and the situation in Ethiopia and Eritrea. This interest is reflected in the Security Council's speedy authorization of peacekeeping missions in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Liberia (UNMIL) and Burundi (ONUB).

As part of efforts to respond to these challenges in the area of peacekeeping, the Council rightly devoted a meeting last year to discuss peacekeeping activities in the pursuit of international peace and security. Along with this welcome initiative came the adoption of resolution 1502 (2003) on the protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones. However, as the open debate on United Nations peacekeeping operations on 17 May 2004 revealed, the Organization would need enormous resources to address the worldwide demands for peacekeeping operations. The awareness created in the course of that debate should generate much needed political support for United Nations peacekeeping operations and for measures to tackle the root causes of conflicts that make such operations necessary in the first place.

Allow me, in this regard, to commend the Security Council's support to our subregional and regional organizations, the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union. We point to the steady progress made in the peace process in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire as clear evidence of that support. We also note with satisfaction that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has improved with the reactivation of the joint verification mechanism at Abuja in June 2004, on the initiative of the President of Nigeria and Chairman of the African Union, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Paul Kagame of Rwanda. We are confident that this mechanism will create the right atmosphere for a peaceful resolution of the crisis in that subregion.

It is noteworthy that the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, established by the Council, has continued to be active in engaging with countries in Africa to find durable solutions to these conflicts. Its joint meeting with the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi of the Economic and Social Council and with non-governmental experts on regional and international norms on unconstitutional regime change in Africa point to that fact.

Undoubtedly, the situation in the Sudan posed serious challenges to the African Union and the international community at the time the report was written. The Security Council's involvement, through the adoption of resolution 1556 (2004), contributed to bringing under control the humanitarian dimension of the problem in the Darfur region of the country. My delegation is pleased to note that the Security Council will continue to lend its support to the Government of the Sudan and the African Union in resolving the conflict. We look forward to the work of the panel of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on allegations of human rights violations in the Sudan.

The festering crisis in the Middle East continues to be of concern to Nigeria. We note in the report that the Council remains committed to this issue, especially in the implementation of the road map by the Quartet. Events in the region have given a sense of urgency to finding a durable solution and to the role of the Council in doing so. It is our hope that, despite the setbacks reflected in the violence and heavy death tolls on both sides, the Council will continue to lend its weight to a permanent solution that recognizes the existence of two States living side by side.

A major area of the Council's work mentioned in the report concerns the progress made in the global effort to combat terrorism. That issue featured on the Council's agenda during the period covered by the report, in the wake of the increase of terrorist attacks worldwide. Nigeria firmly supports the efforts of the international community to confront and neutralize terrorist attacks within and against Member States of the Organization. We note with satisfaction the continuing involvement of the Council in this important matter, and we welcome resolution 1566 (2004), adopted by the Council only last Friday.

As regards the working methods of the Council, Nigeria appreciates recent positive trends, including regular consultations between the Council and regional and subregional organizations. We also note that regular meetings were held with troop-contributing countries, as were open debates, including at the ministerial level, on issues affecting Member States. We believe that the President of the Council's practice of conducting monthly briefings to the press was useful, as was the invitation to non-members to attend periodic wrap-up sessions. Clearly, a lot more needs to be done to improve our knowledge of the Council's work methods and appreciation of the basis of its decisions. For example, the Council's closed meetings and informal consultations should be reduced to a minimum, while more open meetings should be conducted in order to demonstrate the transparency and accountability of the Council.

On the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, my delegation would like to register our appreciation for the initiative of your predecessor, Mr. Julian Hunte, President of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. His initiative added fresh impetus to the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. Member States collectively support a reform of the Security Council, but with different parameters.

As my President stated in the course of the general debate in his address to this Assembly at its 7th meeting, on 23 September,

> "the Security Council should be expanded in its permanent and non-permanent categories to make it more representative, more effective and more acceptable. We hope that those regions of the world that are not currently represented in the permanent membership category will be given membership".

My delegation wishes to assure the Assembly of our cooperation and support in meeting the challenges of this arduous task.

The meeting was rose at 1.10 p.m.